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“Which would you best like to take home to Arty?”
p. 16.

THE HOME VINEYARD:

SKETCHES OF MISSION WORK.

By CAROLINE E. KELLY,

AUTHOR OF

"ARTHUR MERTON; OR, SINNING AND SORROWING," &c., &c.

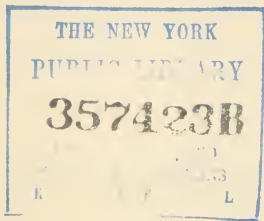


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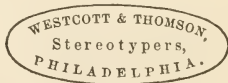
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P R E F A C E.

THE Sketches which comprise this volume have been collected and arranged for the encouragement of Mission Sunday-school Teachers, by one, who though loving the work, has often felt faint-hearted and weary in it.

There is, indeed, much in this field of labor, to try the faith and weary the patience, of even the most enthusiastic and hopeful. Ignorance, Superstition, Stupidity and Vice, with their attendant train of minor evils, fight desperately against the truth. They are alert, cunning and persistent. They marshal their forces with wonderful tact and skill, and not seldom appear to overthrow with a single stroke, the defences which have been set up with patient care and labor by those who are trying to work for God. *It is discouraging.*

I know of no reformatory work where humble, child-like faith is more important and necessary than in that of Home Missions. It is so natural to look for immediate good results and so very seldom that they are seen; it is so hard to retain the influence for good gained on Sunday, through the six succeeding days of street life; so hard to see the lessons over which you prayed, and from which you hoped much, fall unheeded

upon the ear; so hard to meet deceit, and sneers, and scorn, and coarse jests and utter disregard, when your only desire is to give help and healing. Yet all this the Mission-school Teacher is called to encounter, if he be faithful to his task. Nothing, then, but implicit faith in the sustaining grace, and the precious promises, of God will enable him to go forward courageously and hopefully.

Fellow-Laborer! Let us keep in mind this fact. Let us take it as a motto to pray by, to work by, and to live by.

God's truth is omnipotent,—and none are so ignorant, so superstitious, so stupid, or so vicious, as to be beyond the reach of its power. It will open eyes that are blinded with the film of sin; it will unstop deaf ears, and put songs of praise, and shouts of thanksgiving into lewd and profane lips. It will cleanse and purify hearts where Satan and his hosts have held their mad riots, and speak peace to tempest-tossed souls. All this the truth of God—the Gospel of Jesus Christ, will accomplish. Have we not reason, therefore, for hope and confidence? If we live by this Gospel, and know by experience its renewing and regenerating power, may we not expect that it will eventually do for others, even the most abandoned, what it has done and is doing for us?

It is the earnest desire of the Editor of the following Sketches that they may help and cheer some faithful yet desponding souls, in the work they have undertaken. And may God add his blessing.

CAROLINE E. KELLY.

October, 1866.

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THE
HOME VINEYARD.

I.

“WHAT CAN I DO?”

FOR a full half hour I had been standing at my window watching the hurrying, bustling crowd as it moved ceaselessly up and down the city street. It was a bleak, stormy, November day. The wind blew from the northeast; it moaned and sobbed through the bare branches of the elms; it swept around the corner of the house, and howled down the chimney. There was not a sign of a break in the clouds, apparently not a chance of a bit of blue sky or a gleam of sunshine for the

day; the rain fell without cessation, and yet the crowd moved on and on.

Before going to the window I had been looking over a box of old letters—letters received at various times from those who are, or have been, my Sunday-school scholars; and as I opened and glanced over one after another, memory brought to my mind a little picture with each. Some of these pictures were sunny and bright as yesterday—others, heavily shaded, and with sombre back-grounds, corresponded exactly with to-day. Turning from them at last, I went to the window with tears in my eyes, and looked out on the storm, and on the passers by. Men and boys cased in rubber coats, and with caps drawn down over their faces, hurried past; shop girls and school girls, clad in thick water-proof cloaks, and protected from the cold and rain by umbrellas and India rubber boots, tripped by; Irish and German laboring women, with stout shoes and woollen hoods and warm shawls, passed heavily along, while

now and then a poor shivering child of want with bare feet and blue, slender arms, crept by, under the shelter of walls and fences, tattered and woe-begone to the last degree. Poor, suffering little ones! Would heaven I could give you all the warmth and the comfort and the abundance that you so sorely need! But what can I do? My own life is one of labor, and I am forced to use careful economy in order to support myself and the dear ones dependent upon me, in comfort. Wealth, which I would gladly use to relieve God's poor, he has denied me. Again, what can I do? Poor, shivering little ones! My heart aches as I see you flutter by in your wretched rags within reach of the warmly clad and well-fed throngs who pass you without a thought. Who have you to care for you? Who teaches you to lisp your morning and evening prayers? Who points you to Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who loves little lambs like you? Alas! the bare feet and the tattered garments, and the hopeless faces are

but a faint symbol of the poverty within. The soil of sin is on these young hearts, and Satan is watching them with an evil eye, ready to claim them for his own. What can I do? Again, the question comes, as though urged by some unseen voice. Shall "these little outcasts from life's fold" be left to their forlornness, with none to speak loving and cheering words in their ear? Shall they develope into thieves and incendiaries and murderers, and help to swell the crowds that throng our prisons and jails and alms-houses? Shall they dwell among a Christian people, and never hear of Him whose blood can wash the foulest clean? God forbid! But—What can I do? At the fourth repetition of this question I turned from the window, and seating myself at the table, took my pen and vainly endeavored to withdraw my thoughts from a subject, every aspect of which was so painful. But from the page of manuscript which I was preparing, little, sad, weary faces seemed peering up into my own, beseeching me, for his

sake who blessed the little ones, to do something for them. True, there are earnest laborers in this city; there are great charities, of which we may well be proud; generous men, and noble women there are who contribute largely of their abundance for the relief of the destitute and of the suffering; and yet the harvest field is not full of laborers; plenty of work remains to be done; there are highways and hedges where the invitations of the gospel are yet to be carried; no Christian has a right to sit at ease so long as there remains a single soul to be saved. The question of my own personal responsibility, thus forced home upon me, demanded settlement. But I was not yet ready to meet it frankly. Have I not been doing all in my power? I asked myself. These eight years I have been a teacher in the Sunday-school. I have given some of my best hours to the preparation of the lessons. I have striven to impress the truth upon the minds and hearts of my scholars; I have prayed with them and

for them ; I have visited them at their homes, and invited them to mine ; I have never lost sight of any of them, although they are scattered over the country, and some of them are across the sea, as this box of letters witnesses. What could I do more than I have done ? But this pharisaical soliloquy was not satisfactory. The question, after all, was not “ What have I done ? ” but “ What can I do ? ” and it was this which claimed an answer.

Laying aside my pen and the unfinished manuscript, I donned my rubber boots and water-proof cloak, and in another moment had joined the crowd that was still passing up the street. I had no design in doing this other than to escape from the peculiar train of thoughts that annoyed and vexed me. It proved however, that the Lord was leading me to a solution of the question, which I might never have arrived at sitting in my own room.

* * * * *

“ I wish we could get some for Arty, don’t you, sis ? ”

“Yes; can’t we, Johnny? They’re so real nice. Can’t we?”

“No; they cost heaps of money. If we were only rich we’d buy ’em, and some of those posies too.”

“O, I wish we was rich, Johnny! Let’s go in and tell the store man about our Arty, and may be he’ll give us a bunch. Let’s, Johnny.”

But Johnny shook his head.

“He keeps ’em to sell; he don’t keep ’em to give away, sis.”

“If he’d see our Arty, he would, I know,” persisted the little girl. “Anyway, we might ask him, Johnny.”

“You may go in if you want to, and I’ll wait out here for you,” consented Johnny, “but I know he won’t give you any, and p’r’aps he’ll speak cross.”

I had stopped like these two children, attracted first by the fine display of fruit and flowers in the windows, but afterwards to listen to their colloquy; and now, as “sis,”

with timid step, crossed the threshold, I followed to learn the result of her loving plea for "Arty."

The poor child was dripping with rain, a fact which, in itself, was sufficient to insure a rebuff from the pert-looking young clerk who stood lounging against the counter; but so intent was she on her errand, that she did not notice his threatening look.

Pausing by the window to examine the fresh bouquets of flowers, I heard her say in soft, winning accents, "Please, sir, would you give me two or three of the nice grapes for Arty?"

"No," replied the clerk, sharply, "and you'd better be off. Don't you see all the mud and water you've brought in with you? This is no place for beggars."

The little one retreated to the door, but the thought of Arty seemed to give her courage for one more appeal. "He is real sick, and the grapes would taste so good," she said, more pleadingly than before.

The clerk made no reply to this, but took a step towards the child, who cast a frightened glance at me, as her little red fingers essayed to lift the heavy latch.

"Wait a moment," I said. "What is it about Arty?"

"He is my brother," she said, half crying, "and he is always sick, and can't never go out o' doors like me and Johnny."

"And so you wanted some of those nice grapes to take to him?"

"Yes; he'd like 'em so much."

"Why did you not bring some money to buy them?" I asked.

The little face flushed, and grew still more sorrowful, as she answered almost in a whisper,

"We haven't got any money."

"Which would you best like to take home to Arty, a bunch of grapes or one of these beautiful bouquets?"

It was right pleasant to see the beam of hope that danced into the blue eyes, as I proposed this question.

“I don’t know,” she answered, quickly. “He’d like the grapes to eat, and he’d like the flowers to look at and smell of. I don’t know, I’m sure. You going to give ’em to Arty?”

She pressed up to my side as I selected a bunch of the rich purple grapes and a bouquet of fragrant tea roses and heliotropes, and caught my dress in her little hands, almost sobbing out her joy.

“Yes,” said I, “you shall take them home to Arty as soon as they are put up. Now tell me your name?”

“It’s Milly Morrison, but Johnny and Arty always calls me sis.”

“And where do you live?”

“Only just a little way from here.”

“Well, where are you going?” I asked, for she was trying again to lift the door-latch.

“I want to tell Johnny. He is out here.”

So I opened the door, and stepping out upon the side-walk, she caught him by the hand and drew him into the store.

"We've got 'em, Johnny—we've got 'em! Grapes and posies for Arty."

Johnny's dark eyes grew suddenly brilliant, but he said not a word.

"She gave 'em to us for Arty; a'n't she good, Johnny?"

Still not a word from the little fellow, only a grateful glance from the dark eyes.

"Why don't you speak, Johnny? Aren't you real glad?"

"Yes," replied Johnny, soberly, "but we can't never pay her for 'em."

"She doesn't want no pay," said the little girl, quickly, "she gave 'em to us 'cause Arty is sick and she is sorry."

"Yes," said I to Johnny, "I want to do something for your little sick brother."

"Thank you, ma'am," and Johnny made a queer little bow. "I wish you'd come and see Arty and Grammy," he added timidly, as the clerk came forward with the nice parcels.

"Very well," said I, "I would like to go with you, Johnny."

So we went out again into the rain, and the wind blew as hard as before, but I don't think any one of us three thought the weather unpleasant, as we passed rapidly down the street. Johnny led the way, and Milly, with her little hand in mine, tripped along by my side, laughing and prattling with childish glee. It seemed but a little way to Johnny and "sis," but we had walked nearly half a mile when he stopped before an old brick tenement house, and looking around at me, said as cheerfully as though it had been a palace, "This is where we live."

The entrance door stood wide open, and dirty little streams of water were running along the unpainted floor, affording amusement to some half-dozen urchins who were playing in it, but who stopped suddenly at the appearance of a stranger, and surveyed her with stupid silence.

"This is our room," said Johnny, having led me the length of the entry, as he threw open the door of a very large apartment, and

waited for me to enter. "This is Arty, and this is Grammy," he added, before I had time to take even the briefest survey of the room. Milly drew me along to the bed, laughing, and almost crying too, in her joy.

"Guess what we've got for you, Arty?" she said. "Don't tell him, Johnny, don't tell him till he gives just one guess."

"Is it grapes?" asked the little fellow, who sat propped up against the bed's head by clean, coarse pillows.

"Right, the very first time," said Johnny, undoing the parcel and placing it upon his brother's lap. "What do you think of 'em?"

"O, dear me," cried Milly, "how nice everything is!"

Then "Grammy" came limping up to the bedside, smiling and surprised to see such a sight, while Arty, with his long, slender fingers, picked eagerly at the tempting fruit.

"A'n't they good?" asked Milly. "A'n't they splendid?"

“Yes,” said Arty. “Take some, sis, and Grammy, and Johnny. I mustn’t eat ’em all my own self.”

“I don’t want ’em, dear boy,” said “Grammy,” and “I don’t want ’em,” said “sis” and Johnny, putting their hands resolutely behind them.

While this pretty scene was going on, I put the bouquet into a yellow mug that stood on a pine table near the bed, and now placed it beside the grapes on Arty’s lap. It was well worth the price of fruit and flowers, and the long walk in the rain, to witness the unaffected joy and delight of this poor, but happy family, as they surveyed the fragrant blossoms, and rejoiced with the little invalid over his treasures.

Presently Grammy turned to me with her simple apology. “You’ve made us all so glad, Miss, and yet we haven’t so much as asked you to be seated. Please take a chair?”

I took the one she offered, and as she

turned again to Arty, I had time to take a hasty inventory of the furniture of this humble abode. All was poor and old, but as clean as tidy hands could make it. There was Arty's bed with its coarse and patched linen, in one corner, and another smaller bed in the corner opposite; there were two white pine tables, four common chairs, and one wooden rocker that stood near the cooking stove, evidently "Grammy's" seat, for close beside it was a light stand, and on it a large open Bible, and a pair of iron-bowed spectacles. So I knew that "Grammy" was a God-fearing woman.

I stayed half an hour longer, and in that time learned the history of the Morrison family, and something also of other families who dwelt beneath the same roof. The story was far from being a pleasant one.

"I wish I could do something to help them," said Grammy as I rose to take leave. "It is dreadful to see people going right on to their own destruction and not be able to

save them. But they turn everything I say into scorn and ridicule; they call me ‘the old woman parson,’ and teach their children to laugh at me. I can’t bear to see the poor creatures left to grow up like little heathen, but all I can do is to keep Johnny and sis away from their company. There’s work enough for Christians in this house, Miss—Christians as have more influence than a poor old body like me,” and as she said this, Grammy gave me a searching look.

“We must pray for them,” I said, bidding her good-bye; and turning hastily away, I went out into the rain, and hurried homewards.

II.

ARTY MORRISON.

OLD Mrs. Morrison's kitchen was sufficiently roomy for a school-room, and was made comfortable for that purpose by adding about a dozen low wooden benches to the furniture already there. During the week, or when they were not in use, these benches were to be stored away in an unfinished room, just back of the kitchen. This preparation made, to the almost inexpressible delight of the aged Christian, a few children were persuaded to gather together one fine winter morning, by an exhibition in the long, dismal entry, of a colored engraving, and the promise that they should examine it more closely if they would come into Mrs. Morrison's kitchen. And this was the beginning of a school which soon

became very dear to many hearts, and the object of much labor and many prayers. Ere many weeks passed, however, the kitchen was found to be too small for the accommodation of the little ones who gathered in it from Sunday to Sunday, and a larger room was secured, not many rods distant, over an engine house, which proved to be just what we needed for the next six months.

It was while the school was yet in its infancy, that some of the materials for this book were placed in my hands by one of the teachers, while others came under my own personal observation, and seemed to me, for various reasons, worthy of preservation.

The change of our school-room from Mrs. Morrison's kitchen to the hall of the engine house was a source of great grief to the poor invalid boy Arty, who was the most earnest and faithful student of the Bible for his years that I ever saw. He had entered with childish enthusiasm into all our plans for the school from the beginning, and it was

with a feeling of reluctance that I one morning took my seat beside his little bed, to speak to him as gently as possible of the necessity there was for removing to a larger and more convenient room. I can never forget the expression of grief that passed over his wan face as he began to comprehend the truth, or the pathetic tones of his voice, as he said, "Why, Miss Jessie, can't we make this room do if we have more chairs? It is such a very big room, and Grammy and Johnny and Milly would sit on my bed, I know, and that would make room for three more."

"But, my dear boy, there were five boys here last Sunday who had no seats, and they want to come every Sunday, and one of the teachers has found a number of little girls who are coming just as soon as they can have decent clothes to wear. We cannot possibly turn them away, and this room is filled every Sunday. Aren't you glad, Arty, that God has put it in the hearts of so many children to wish to come and learn about him?"

“O yes, Miss Jessie,” replied Arty, “but,” and here a sob almost choked his utterance—“but it almost breaks my heart to think that the Sunday-school must go away from here. What shall I do, Miss Jessie?”

“I know you will miss it sadly, dear Arty,” I said, “and perhaps we can think of some plan by which you may still be a Sunday-school scholar. How would you like to have Miss Hildreth come and teach you every Sunday at the same hour that we have our school?”

“That would be nice,” began Arty, with brightening eyes. Then he checked himself and shook his head. “No, Miss Jessie, that wouldn’t do, because I’m only one little boy, and they all like Miss Hildreth. She ought to have a big class.”

“But how would you like Miss Hildreth to bring her class here, instead of taking it to the new school-room?”

Again the pale face brightened, but I saw in a moment that Arty would deny himself

even this, for so expressive was his countenance that it was easy to read each passing thought before it was framed into words.

“No, Miss Jessie,” he said, trying to smile. “It wouldn’t be like a Sunday-school unless they were with the others and said the commandments and the Lord’s prayer, and sung the sweet hymns. It wouldn’t be half as nice, and I’m afraid they wouldn’t care so much about coming.”

“What can we do for you, then, Arty?”

“You will pray for me every Sunday, won’t you, Miss Jessie? It will be real nice to know that you and the other ladies and the scholars all think of me when you ask God to bless the school. And when you pray, Miss Jessie, won’t you please call me ‘Arty Morrison,’ right out, instead of ‘the little sick boy?’”

“Yes, dear, if you wish it,” I said, somewhat surprised by the request. “But you know God understands who we mean by ‘the little sick boy’ just as well as when we say ‘Arty Morrison.’”

“Yes, ma’am,” replied Arty, with the smile peculiar to himself, and which seemed more like the smile of an angel than that of a child, “but you remember the verse that tells how the good Shepherd calls his own sheep by name, and of course he calls the lambs by their name, and I like to think that he calls me ‘Arty Morrison,’ and that is why I asked you, Miss Jessie. Do you mind?”

“O, no, my child,” I said, “I will call you by your name when I pray for you, both at home and in school. And now, Arty, you must ask Johnny and Milly to remember all they can of their lessons, and what is said on Sunday, so as to be able to repeat it to you when they come home, and I will send you a little paper every other week that you may keep for your own.”

Arty tried to be cheerful after this, and asked a great many questions about the new school-room, but it was very plain to us all that the removal was the greatest grief that he had ever known.

Late in the following spring, as I was one morning sitting at my desk, there came a rap at my door, followed by the entrance of Johnny Morrison. The little fellow was quite out of breath, and could scarcely make himself intelligible, but from the few words I caught I found that Arty was dying, and had called for me. It was a summons which I had been expecting for some weeks past, and yet it now seemed altogether sudden. I made what haste I was able, and reached the house in season to listen to Arty's last words, and receive his parting kiss. "Grammy" was weeping beside him; little Milly sat on the foot of the bed, the childish wonder that she felt at a scene so new, visible on her face. Miss Hildreth, too, was there, ministering to the needs of the little sufferer, and Johnny, having reached home some minutes before me, stood crying silently by the window.

Arty knew me at once and gave a smile of welcome.

"I thought you would come, Miss Jessie,"

he said. "I'm going home pretty soon, and I am so glad. I've got real tired of lying here so long; a'n't it well that Jesus is willing to take me?"

"Dear little soul," said "Grammy" through her tears, "that's just the way he's been a talking all day. It seems as though he was an angel a'ready. But how can I give him up? how can I?"

Arty looked almost reproachfully at her for a moment, as she thus spoke, it seemed so strange to him that she could wish to keep him back from the glory that was even now opening to his vision; then feebly reaching for her hand, he clasped his own over it and murmured,

"You will come too, pretty soon, Grammy. You mustn't cry because I want to be with Jesus. I love you, Grammy, but I love him better, and he will take care of you and Johnny and Milly."

The poor old woman checked her tears at these words, for her faith was as childlike and

strong as Arty's, but it was plain to see how heavily the chastisement fell on her loving heart.

"Arty has a message for the Sunday-school," said Miss Hildreth, after an interval of some minutes.

"Will you give them a message from me next Sunday, Miss Jessie? You know I will be dead then, but they will know it came from me just the same," and Arty looked anxiously in my face.

"Yes, my dear child," I replied, "I will tell them whatever you wish."

"I want you to tell them that Arty Morrison is dead," said the little fellow, speaking slowly and very earnestly, "and that I don't want them to pray for me any more, because my spirit is safe with Jesus, and my body is done aching. And please tell them, Miss Jessie, that Arty Morrison wanted them to love the dear Saviour, because he is so good, and never to grieve him by doing wrong. I wish they would never lie, or steal, or swear

any more, because that grieves him. And please tell them," he added, "that when Arty Morrison died, he was so happy that he wanted to sing all the time. Will you let them sing 'Around the throne of God in heaven' next Sunday, Miss Jessie?"

"Yes, dear."

"When I am dead may I have some flowers in my little house?"

"What does he mean by that, the darling?" asked Grammy.

"I mean flowers in the little house where they put my body," explained Arty. "I like flowers so much! Some in my hands and some on the pillow, just as you fixed them once when I was real sick, Miss Jessie?"

"Yes, dear, I will see that you have beautiful, sweet flowers," I said. "Is there anything else you wish me to do for you?"

"I'd like to kiss you all once more, and then I'm going to sleep, and I guess I will wake up in heaven? O, won't it be nice? Won't it be beautiful?"

Then Arty kissed us one by one, as calmly as though he were bidding us good-night, and turning his head wearily on the pillow, closed his eyes. We watched him as he slept, until near noon, when suddenly his eyes flew open, and with a rapturous smile, he cried,

“I see Jesus and the angels! They are calling ‘Arty,’ ‘Arty Morrison,’ and I must go.”

These were the last words that fell from his lips. We watched until the faint, fluttering breath ceased, and we knew that the spirit had returned to God who gave it, and that little Arty Morrison was safe folded in the arms of the good Shepherd, who called him by his name.

III.

MAGGIE HARMON.

ONE of the wildest specimens of untamed, untrained humanity that I ever met, was Maggie Harmon. She was led, or rather pushed, into the Sunday-school room one morning by Miss Porter, a most worthy and energetic teacher, who had found her near the door busily engaged in pelting the children with snow balls, as they passed her on their way to school. She had evidently made all the resistance of which she was capable with her childish strength, before permitting herself to be taken captive, and now that she was fairly within the walls of the school-room, and surrounded by some fifty girls and boys, she suffered herself to be pushed along up the aisle

and into a seat within reach of Miss Porter's restraining hand. Certainly there was nothing very attractive or comely in the child's appearance, as she sat on the very edge of the chair, with her thumb in her mouth, her elfish black eyes surveying the scene before her, through the matted locks of hair that fell over her face and neck, and a sullen frown on her brow. Her dress was a mere bundle of rags and tatters, scarcely reaching her ankles, which, with her arms, neck, feet, and hands, were covered only by a thick coating of grimy dirt. In short, the new scholar wore a most forbidding aspect, and a less energetic teacher than Miss Porter would have suffered her to slip away, as she attempted more than once to do during the devotional exercises. Even the singing, which generally attracts and holds the attention of the rudest specimens of childhood, seemed quite powerless to attract Maggie; it might have fallen upon deaf ears, for all the impression it seemed to make upon her. When the opening exercises were over,

Miss Porter, still retaining her hold on Maggie's arm, said to her kindly,

"I think you will like to come here on Sunday mornings. You see how many girls there are just about as old as you, and they like it very much."

Maggie deigned no reply to this remark.

"What is your name, my dear?" continued Miss Porter.

"I sha'n't tell you," growled Maggie, making another fruitless endeavor to wrench her arm from the firm grasp that held it.

"Please, teacher, her name be Maggie Harmon," ventured one of the class.

"That is a nice name," said Miss Porter. "I have a little sister who is called Maggie. Where does this Maggie live, I wonder?"

"I don't know," said the child who had answered the previous question.

"Guess you don't," said Maggie, half laughing. "Guess there don't nobody know, 'thout it's me and Betty."

"Well," said Miss Porter, drawing two or

three cards from her satchel, "I have some pictures to show you this morning, and I want you all to look at them very carefully, and tell me what you see in them, and afterwards I will tell you a story about them." The children gathered round her, as she spoke, but Maggie, feeling the restraining hand let go her arm for an instant, seized the opportunity, and upsetting her chair, made a grand rush for the door, and was seen no more that day. The next Sunday, and the next, she appeared in the entry, but by mutual agreement no one asked her to enter. It was thought best to suffer her to take her own course, and we felt pretty confident that she would soon find her way into the hall. On the third Sunday she came in, like a culprit, shivering with cold, her poor rags covered with the snow that was rapidly falling, and her neck, arms, and feet almost frozen. There was a low stool standing near the stove, and as the children began to sing, poor Maggie went and sat down upon it, holding her purple hands to the fire. No one

went near her, or spoke to her, and just before the school was dismissed, she got up and left the room. During the ensuing week, Miss Porter and another of the teachers cut out and made some thick, warm garments for the forlorn, neglected child, and they were put in the school-room closet ready for her in case she should again make her appearance. No one knew where she lived, and none of us had ever met her in the street ; whither she went, or whence she came, was quite a mystery to all of us, but we already felt a deep interest in her, and were anxious to get some hold upon her. Sunday morning came, and with it another heavy fall of snow, but Maggie was the first child who appeared at the door. I found her sitting on the steps, and as I turned the key in the lock, I said,

“ You are in good season, Maggie. Have you been here long ? ”

“ No,” said Maggie, “ not more’n an hour, I guess.”

“ You must be very cold ; run right in, and

we will soon have a good fire. Haven't you anything warm to wear over your shoulders this winter, Maggie?"

"Nothing but what I have on. I had a shawl, but Betty, she wanted it, and I had to let her have it."

"Who is Betty?" I asked, as I lit the fire.

"Why she's Betty," was the lucid reply.

"Do you live with her?"

"Yes; we lives together, mostly."

"What do you do for a living?"

"We picks rags sometimes, and sometimes we begs."

By this time the fire was burning, and Maggie's limbs were beginning to thaw out, so I went to the closet and brought out the comfortable and warm garments, and held them up for the child to see. Her face brightened at the sight.

"Them a'n't for me, are they?" she asked, incredulously.

"Yes, if you would like to come here and be a Sunday-school scholar. Some of the

ladies made them purposely for you. Will you come every Sunday when you are well?"

"I bet I will," cried Maggie, with enthusiasm. "Can I put 'em on now, before the other folks come?"

There was a closet connected with the hall, which was used for a dressing room. Here we had conveniences for washing, which were found useful almost every Sunday, as many of the children appeared to have no such conveniences at their homes. Thither Maggie went, and after a faithful use of soap and water, the old rags were cast off, and the new clothes put on, and she stood forth a neat, comely-looking child, perfectly astonished at the metamorphosis which had taken place in her appearance. It was right pleasant to see her quietly take her seat beside Miss Porter, and listen with some interest to the exercises of the morning, although she did not attempt to join in them. We began to think this a very hopeful and encouraging case, and were little prepared on the succeeding Sunday to see

Maggie appear at the door, as unwashed and ragged as ever.

“Why, child, where are the new clothes that were given you?” was the question that fell from Miss Porter’s lips, as she looked into the sullen and downcast face.

“Betty stole ’em and sold ’em for rum, she did!” replied Maggie. “I told her not, but she would, and I hate her.”

“Well, come in, poor girl,” said Miss Porter kindly, “and we will see what can be done for you.” But Maggie utterly refused to do this; she would be coaxed no further than to her old seat on the stool by the stove, where she remained until just before school was dismissed.

Two weeks passed after this before we again saw Maggie Harmon. We had almost given her up, when one morning she appeared at the hall door, wrapped in a faded old shawl, and with a comparatively clean face and hands.

“I’ve got back my shawl and I’m coming

all the time now," she said, as she brushed past me into the school-room, and took her seat. "I a'n't going to live with Betty any longer."

"Where are you going to live?" I asked.

"Oh, I don't know. I guess I'll find a place somewhere," was the careless reply. "I slept in an old hogshead last night, and I mean to to-night, if somebody else don't get it 'fore I do." The independence of this little wanderer was amusing, while at the same time her forlorn condition called forth the warmest sympathy. A temporary home was found for her beneath the humble roof of a poor Scotch widow; she was again provided with decent clothing, and became a regular attendant of the Sunday-school. But Maggie was a most troublesome child to manage. She was noisy, disorderly, and rebellious to the last degree, determined to have her own will in all respects, and setting the authority of the teacher at defiance. Her influence in the school was decidedly bad, and yet how could we turn

her away—this “little outcast from life’s fold?”

“We must have patience and pray much for the poor child,” said Miss C——, a most faithful teacher.

“I say so to myself every day,” replied Miss Porter, “but I confess my faith is not very strong.”

“Ah,” said Miss C——, “there is just where the trouble lies. How can we expect God to answer us, when we do not believe that he will? ‘According to your faith be it unto you;’ and you remember that in his own country Jesus ‘did not many mighty works because of their unbelief.’”

Well, we prayed for poor Maggie in our social teachers’ meetings, as well as in our closets, and in the course of a few weeks there did seem to be some improvement in her behavior, and we took courage.

Late in the spring of the first year of our acquaintance with Maggie, a permanent home was found for her in the family of a worthy

mechanic, who lived in the country, and we bade her good-bye, not without regret, but feeling that the change would be for her benefit. We heard occasionally from her after she left, that she was well, and quite contented in her new situation, and also that she gave good satisfaction to the kind people who had provided her with a home, but she never said anything in reference to her spiritual life, for which we felt most solicitous, until a few months since, Miss Porter received a letter from which I am permitted to make the following extract :

“ I have never forgotten how good and patient you were with me when I was in your Sunday-school. It used to be just as much as I could do to keep from crying sometimes when you were talking to me, and I seemed so ugly and careless, but I wouldn't let anybody see how much I cared. I think you and the other ladies will be glad to hear that I am trying to live a Christian life, and I believe God has forgiven my sins. I can never

thank you enough for what you have done for me. I was going to destruction as fast as I could go, when you took pity on me, and it makes me tremble when I think where I might have been now but for your kindness and the grace of God."

Fellow-laborer in the Sunday-school, you who are almost discouraged and disheartened at the stupidity or carelessness of some rebellious member of your class, I charge you give no place to despondent thoughts. Have patience, and let your prayer be the prayer of faith, and be sure the answer will come at last, for "He is faithful who has promised."

IV.

MRS. O'FLYNN.

MRS. O'FLYNN and her two children lived in the damp cellar kitchen of an old house on —— street. The four steps that led down to their room were steep, narrow, and shaky, and great caution was needful in order to pass over them without a broken limb, or fracture of some description. The room itself was six by eight feet in size, and lighted by one small pane of glass over the door. For furniture, there was a stove and a broken chair, a three-legged stool, and a chest, and these, with Mrs. O'Flynn, her two little girls, and two visitors, occupied every inch of available space. When first we entered, the children were alone, but at the sound of our voices their mother appeared from the room opposite

her own, where she had been gossiping with a neighbor.

"Well now! well now!" she cried, groping along through the fast gathering darkness, "if here a'n't some raal ladies! And who may ye be?"

"Your little girls' Sunday-school teachers," I replied, "Miss C—— and Miss S——. We have been here before, you remember."

"Indeed yes, miss. Well now, Katie, why don't ye hand the ladies a chair? Ha'n't ye got no manners, a standin' there with the fingers in yer mouth. Light the candle quick, child. Where's the matches?"

"In your pocket," said Katie, timidly.

"No they a'n't, child. Did I ever! I jist hid 'em away for fear the childher 'ud try to light a candle when it gets dark, and burn themselves. They are the best childher you ever see, miss. I al'ays hides away the matches, and they never touches 'em. I can trust 'em wid anything."

While Mrs. O'Flynn was talking, she was

fumbling about the room in search of the matches, which she found at last, as Katie had said, in her pocket. The feeble rays of the candle that she lit only made the squalor and filth of the room more apparent. What was there here to cheer the little hearts of the two children who stood stupidly staring in our faces? How could they call this "home," which had not in it a single ray of sunlight, or an object on which the eye might rest with delight? As these thoughts passed rapidly through my mind, Mrs. O'Flynn, impatient of the brief silence, suddenly fell on her knees before me, exclaiming,

"I put the Sunday dress on to Annie Jane, as you see miss, but I couldn't help it, for she was naked entirely; an' I did mean to come to the concert meeting, as you bid the childher to tell me. I dressed 'em both up, both Katie and Annie Jane, an' walked up an' down the street wid one on each side of me; back an' forth I went, searching for a chance to slip in when nobody 'ud see me! I hope to die if I

didn't mean to go when I said I would, an' at last I sent Katie slyly to ask in a store what time it might be, an' they tould her it was six o'clock, an' I know it was a quarter past, an' niver a bit of light to be seen in the hall at all at all, an' I hope to be laid in my grave to-morrow, if it wa'n't the very Saturday evening you said for us to come."

"It was Sunday, not Saturday evening, Mrs. O'Flynn."

"Well, I never!" she cried, catching her breath and raising her hands, "I surely meant to go. Forgive me for telling such a lie, miss. I don't know as ye can understand me," she went on, and so voluble was her speech it was really difficult to follow her. "I don't talk as ye do. The store-keeper yonder asked me why I don't talk Yankee talk, but I'm Irish, an' I can't do that, but my childher are Yankees. Have ye any brothers or sisters, miss?"

"Yes."

"Well, I hope to die if I've any of my own flesh and blood in the wurld but these two."

“Katie has been absent two or three Sundays, Mrs. O’Flynn,” said Miss C——. “What is the trouble?”

“Oh, she’s been awful sick, Katie has.” Then, catching Miss C—— by the hand, she whispered, “O, I tell you the raal truth an’ that’s no lie. And then ye see, miss, she hasn’t got a hat to her head, and that’s a shaker wid the top all out; but then we ha’n’t got no praist now, an’ she shall come. By’n-by we’ll have one entirely; then I can’t tell.”

“She shall have a hat, if you will see that she comes every Sunday, Mrs. O’Flynn.”

“I will, miss, I will; trust me for that. I’m Irish and my childher are Yankees, but the Lord knows my heart, and he knows that I believe you an’ all the good ladies that give the clothes to the childher ’ul get to heaven just as soon as the Irish.”

With this assertion we bade Mrs. O’Flynn and the little girls good-night, and made our way to the steps, thankful to be once more in the open air.

Katie and Annie Jane were quite constant in their attendance at Sunday-school for the month following this visit. Then both were absent, and we learned that Annie Jane was very ill. We called without delay to offer assistance, and inquire for the poor child, whom we found gasping for breath, while her mother hung over her shrieking and sobbing by turns. The small room was crowded with Mrs. O'Flynn's neighbors, and the air was heavy with the fumes of whisky, tobacco, and onions. The women eyed me askance, as I endeavored to get a glimpse of poor Annie Jane, and I felt that it was with no friendly glance.

"Have you had the doctor to see her?" I asked.

"O yes, miss," said Mrs. O'Flynn, "and he left three bits of powders to be a giving her all night, but sure an' tho' I give 'em to the darlint all to wunst, they don't seem to help her. O! O! O!"

"You ought to do just as the doctor bids

you," I said, shocked that a child's life should be in such ignorant hands. "If you want Annie Jane to be well again, you must obey his directions. What can I do for you?"

"Nothing," said Mrs. O'Flynn, rocking herself back and forth, half crying and half singing.

"O my dear Annie Jane! if it had been Katie I wouldn't have cared! I'd be willing to bury Katie; but I a'n't a willing to bury you, Annie Jane!"

Poor Katie! she stood in a corner of the room, apparently unmindful of her mother's words, but as I passed out I saw a tear in her eye, and she whispered,

"I wish it was me instead of Annie Jane. Mother loves her best!"

Annie Jane died the following day, and they held a great wake over her body, the next neighbor opening her doors for the accommodation of Mrs. O'Flynn's acquaintances.

Two or three weeks passed, and Katie had not been seen at Sunday-school. We met her once or twice on the street, and knew by her wistful eyes that it was not want of inclination that kept her away, but the only answer she made to our inquiries was that she was coming again pretty soon.

One evening Miss C——, in company with another teacher, called again on Mrs. O'Flynn, determined to learn whether Katie was still a member of the school. They were received very much in Mrs. O'Flynn's usual manner, with a profusion of words and apologies, but there was some constraint visible, when at the first opportunity that offered, Miss C—— put the question which was uppermost in her mind :

“Mrs. O'Flynn, have you taken Katie away from the mission-school?”

“Indade, thin, miss,” said the poor woman, “I think ye's be all good folks, an' I'm sure ye'll get to heaven as quick as we Catholics, for the good ye've done to the poor; but—”

“Well, what is it, Mrs. O’Flynn?”

“They all say as Annie Jane was took away for a judgment upon me for lettin’ her and Katie go to your school, miss.”

“Who says so?”

“Indade, miss, an’ I’ll call no names by yer lave, only as the praist that attinded the funeral heard of it, an’ he took occasion to say it was a judgment, an’ if it be so, sure I’d better lave Katie at home wid meself.”

It was, of course, useless to attempt to reason with the poor ignorant woman. We were obliged to give up little Katie, but we have often seen her since then, and we hope that the time may yet come when her mother will consent to her again becoming a member of the school.

V.

ALMOST FALLEN.

“PLEASE, Miss Jessie, mother wants you to come home with me as fast as ever you can.”

This was the summons that met my unwilling ears about seven o'clock of a bitterly cold evening in January, 18—. The fire was burning brightly in my grate, the gas was lighted, and a new volume of a favorite author, with tempting, uncut leaves, lay before me on the table. Such a comfortable evening I had promised myself! I looked at the hungry-eyed child, and hesitated.

“What is it, Sarah? Cannot your mother wait until to morrow?”

“O, I don't know what it is, Miss Jessie, but she said to come now, for the love of

heaven, and she has been crying all day, and sister Jenny has been so strange. I'm afraid it is something dreadful."

Of course this settled the question of duty, but I confess that I donned my hood and cloak and left my room with a sigh of regret. Up one street and down another, with little Sarah's hand clasped in mine, and the sharp wind cutting our faces, we sped along until her poor home was reached.

Mrs. Bagley met me at the door. Her pale face, lined with furrows of care and trouble, looked almost deathly by the dim candle-light, and her eyes were red and swollen with weeping. Jenny stood by the window. She was a tall, slender girl of sixteen, and very fair to look upon. I had been pleased with her lady-like appearance and gentle manners on my former visits to the family, but I saw at a glance that something was wrong with her now. She did not look up when I entered, and her face wore a sullen, defiant look, that was painful to behold.

“Sarah said that you wished to see me, Mrs. Bagley,” I remarked, after bidding Jenny a good evening, which she answered only by a nod of her head.

“Yes I did,” and here a fresh burst of tears choked the poor woman’s utterance, as she sank down upon a chair, and covered her face with her hands.

I stood silent for a moment, and glanced around the room. Plainly, the wolf had entered it, but cleanliness was stamped upon the few poor articles of household furniture that still remained. On the table lay a bundle of work.

“Jenny, what is the trouble?” I asked. A bitter laugh was the only response. Mrs. Bagley wiped her eyes, and seemed striving to regain her composure. I will give you the story which she told me as nearly as possible in her own words.

“I am the widow of an honest mechanic, as you know already, Miss S——,” she began. “My husband has been dead these six

years. I earned bread and a shelter for my family by my needle until Jenny was thirteen, and since then we have worked together, and kept along pretty comfortable until a few months ago, when I had a sickness that left me too weak to do much. Jenny was a good girl, and it made my heart ache to see her sitting here day after day, and late into the night, stitching her young life away as I have done mine, and making only enough to keep body and soul together. But what could I do? I was obliged to have the doctor, and he and the medicines took every cent of the ten dollars that I had managed to lay by. Then Jenny had to carry home the work when it was done, and that was hardest of all, for you know she is a comely child, and the man that has employed us is—well, I never liked his looks or his ways, though he never gave me an unhandsome word, except to find fault with my sewing, which he always made free to do, no matter how much pains I had taken with it. You see the bundle there on the

table? There are six good shirts in it, well made and finished, with linen bosoms and wristbands stitched by hand. We were to have twenty-five cents apiece for them—that was the agreement. Day before yesterday they were done, and Jenny took them to the shop. She had been a dozen times before, and Mr. Bates had always treated her civilly enough, but this time he looked over the work, and told her it wasn't well done, and she must take out the sleeves and the bosoms, and put them in again, before he would pay her, or give her anything more to do. So she came back, and we were all sad enough that night, for we needed the money sorely. We had scarcely bread enough in the cupboard to last us through yesterday, and only a few coals for our fire, and the rent coming due next Monday; you see it was a gloomy prospect. But Jenny went to work, and got the shirts finished again this morning. She took them to the shop as soon as they were done, and Mr. Bates opened the bundle and ex-

amined each one separately. ‘Ah,’ said he, ‘the wristbands are wrong; your stitches gape, young woman, and must be done over before I pay you a single penny.’ Then my poor girl burst out crying, for she is easily touched in her feelings, and she told him how poor we were, and how we had no bread, and that the work was done as nicely as she could do it, and she begged him to pay her something if it were only enough to buy a loaf of bread and a basket of coal, and he wouldn’t. But he asked her why she need spend her days slaving at her needle, when she might have money and to spare, and dress as fine as any lady in the land. My Jenny made him no answer, but she took up the bundle and came home and told me what he had said to her. Then she sat down to her work, and all day she stitched and stitched until it was done, speaking not a word, but with that awful look on her face.”

Mrs. Bagley stopped, and put her hand up to her head. In the pause, Jenny stepped

forward, and finished the sad story. Her usually soft voice sounded harsh and strange, and as she stood before me, bitter, defiant, and despairing, I could scarcely realize that it was the same fair, innocent young girl whom I had so often looked upon with pleasure.

“And now the work is done,” she said, “and I am going to carry it home, and I shall tell Mr. Bates that I will not slave at my needle any more if there’s a quicker way to earn money, for I can’t see my mother and Sarah starve, and I cannot starve myself.”

“And this is what is killing your mother?” I said, pointing at the poor woman who sat speechless before us.

“I can’t help it,” said Jenny, “it would be better if we were all dead together, and out of the way. I wish we were, I am so tired. But it is of no use to waste words, I must go, and when I come back again, mother, I will bring you a purse full of money, and you shall be warmed and fed. It’s no worse for me than for other poor girls.”

“Jenny,” I said, laying my hand on hers as she took up her bundle of work.

“Well,” she said, “what is it?”

“Have you thought of God to-day?”

“Don’t talk to me of God,” she exclaimed, throwing off my hand. “There is no God. I used to believe the story when I was a child like Sarah, but I am not such a fool now. A God in heaven, good and kind, as they used to tell me, and able to do all things, and yet leave poor wretches like me to starve, or else become a by-word and a reproach to the town! Don’t talk to me of God! I know how your respectable folks will point at me,” she added, drawing a deep, convulsive sigh. “I’ve seen them hold back their fine dresses when even a poor virtuous girl such as I have been has passed them on the street: and I’ve seen them sneer at the poor women they have helped to starve, and then driven to desperation as I am driven. I wish they had to bear what we have to bear, just once, and see if they would be better than we.”

“But, Jenny,—”

“Don’t talk, Miss S——,” she interrupted, sharply. “You mean well, and you are kinder than the most of them, but you don’t know what it is to have starvation staring you in the face, and no where to turn for help. Did you ever grow hungry in your life? Did you ever see those dear to you dying before your eyes for want of the food and clothing and help you might give them if you would? Did you ever sit all day and all night until the next day’s dawn, stitching, stitching, stitching until your brain whirled, and your eyes seemed bursting from your head, and your feet were numb with the cold,—and then creep off to bed and dream awful dreams until the sun was up and you had to go back to your work again? I have done it, but I will do it no more. Nobody cares for me but mother and little Sarah, and the money I earn may help to keep the child from walking the way I am going—who knows?” Again her hand was laid on the bundle, and again I arrested it.

“You must listen to me a moment, Jenny,” I said. “There is honest work that you may find to do in this great city; have you tried?”

“I can’t leave mother to go out to service, and I have not the strength for it either. I haven’t learning enough to teach school, even if I could get one to teach, and I’m not quick enough at figures to get a place as saleswoman in a store. Besides, while I was looking for a place, we would be turned into the streets, and starve to death. I have been thinking it all over,” she added, in a softer tone, “and I see but this one way—so it is no use to say any more about it. My mind is made up.”

“One moment more, Jenny,” and I caught her arm as she attempted to pass. “I will see that you have employment. Here is my purse—or stay—I will go and buy food and coal for to-night—your rent shall be paid on Monday. I will take your bundle of work to Mr. Bates, and tell him that you do not wish



“At that moment Aunt Roxy . . . entered the room.”

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for any more ; and you may come to me to-morrow afternoon, and we'll see what can be done for you and your mother and Sarah."

Before I finished speaking, Jenny was on her knees beside her mother, sobbing like a child. Then I knew that I was no longer needed, and silently left the room.

Before the close of another week, Jenny was learning the dressmaker's trade with an excellent woman ; her mother and sister were comfortably provided for, and Hope once more shone in upon their grateful hearts. Jenny soon found her way to the Sabbath-school with little Sarah, and from thence to the house of God, where she has learned lessons of faith and love that have dispelled the doubts and bitterness that once possessed her soul.

This is not an exceptional case. You may number them by scores, aye, hundreds, in every large city where the wages given for work is insufficient for the support of the work-woman, alone ; and of the many patient

ones who bend over their needles day by day and night by night, until eye and brain and heart are weary beyond telling, how many are there who have not helpless ones looking to them for support?

We are too apt to view with indifference, or scorn, or self-righteous piety, or at best a compassion that savors strongly of condemnation, the poor wrecks of womanhood as they pass us in the street, forgetting that they are verily our kindred, that they were once capable of all the sweetness and grace that lends to woman her charm, and makes her the delight and the pride of loving hearts.

I do not say that we are responsible for all the shame and the degradation that we meet; but we are responsible for all that we can prevent and do not: or if, through want of care, or sympathy, or justice, or benevolence on our part, any human being is defrauded of the means of living honestly and righteously.

Let us remember those words uttered by poor Jenny B—— with truth that was bit-

terly keen coming from her young lips. "I've seen your respectable folks hold back their fine dresses when even a poor virtuous girl such as I have been, has passed them on the street; and I've seen them sneer at the poor woman they have helped to starve, and then driven to desperation as I am driven." This is not the treatment they should receive at our hands. Fallen they may be, to such depths that we shudder even in thought to follow, but they are still the objects of God's pity, and of Christ's redeeming love. Shall our scornful glances drive them further into sin, further away from that infinite pity and love?

Let us carry them in prayer to Him who spake forgiveness when men had called for judgment, and by all the means in our power strive to lead them back to hope, and to repentance, always bearing in our remembrance that truth which our pride and self-righteousness find it so hard to believe—

"They have but stumbled in the path
That we in weakness trod!"

VI.

THE DRUNKARD'S DAUGHTER.

“MY father is a drunkard and my mother is dead.” This was the brief and touching story of a sad-faced child, who came timidly up to the superintendent’s desk one morning and gave her name as Nellie Robinson.

“Where do you live, my dear?”

“In Grover’s Place, No. 8, up four flights.”

“Have you brothers or sisters?”

“I have my sister Mary, and brother Joe, but Joe went to sea a year ago, and we haven’t heard from him since.”

“Do you attend school?”

“No, I don’t have time.”

“What do you find to do? You are too small to work much.”

"I pick coal on the Back Bay and I get chips on the wharves, and sometimes I have to beg, for we are real poor, when father has his sprees."

"Well, Nellie, we are glad to see you here, and we will try to make it pleasant for you in our Sunday-school, so that you will want to be here every Sunday. Some one will call at your house this week. No. 8, Grover's Place, did you say?"

The child nodded, and after a moment's awkward pause stammered out,

"If you please, it would be better for a lady to call when my father isn't at home. He doesn't like Bible women, and he would not let me come here if he knew it. He isn't at home much of any, after nine o'clock in the morning until supper time."

"Very well; you may come with me, and I will introduce you to a lady who will be your teacher, and whom you will love very much, I am sure."

Nellie followed the superintendent to Miss

C——'s class, and was received with a smile of welcome, so sweet and pleasant, that it brought a smile to her own sad little face. Room was made for her on the bench close beside the teacher's chair, and as she sat down she tucked her ragged gown and shawl close around her, so that they might not touch Miss C——'s nice dress and cloak.

It was soon found that Nellie could read very well, and that she was not quite ignorant of the Bible. She had heard the story of Moses and of Joseph, of David and of Daniel, and she knew that Jesus Christ was the Saviour of men; and the interest with which she listened to every word that fell from the teacher's lips, the tear that trembled in her eye, showed that she was a child of sensitive and tender nature, whose heart was open for the reception of truth.

"Who told you these beautiful Bible stories?" asked Miss C——, when the lesson for the morning was finished.

"My mother used to tell them to me, and

sometimes sister Mary reads to me. She has got a little Testament that she hides so father sha'n't get it."

"Would you like to have a Bible of your own, Nellie?"

The child's eyes fairly sparkled with delight.

"Yes; I'd like it better than anything in the world," she replied, "only I'm afraid father would get it away from me. Mother had one once, and he wouldn't let her keep it. She felt so bad that she couldn't help crying when he took it away, and it made sister Mary so angry that she wanted mother to take her and me and go off somewhere, where father wouldn't ever find us; but mother said that would be wrong. It wasn't long after that mother died, and Mary and I have stayed with him ever since, because she wanted us to, unless he used us ill. But I don't like to stay where he is."

Nellie's artless story deeply interested Miss C——, and early in the week she took occa-

sion to call at No. 8, Grover's Place. The small attic chamber into which she was ushered by the smiling Nellie was faultlessly clean; the scanty furniture was arranged in such a manner as to give a home look to the room, and Mary, who rose to receive the visitor, in spite of her thin, patched gown, had the voice and manners of a lady.

"I told sister Mary that you were coming," said Nellie, when Miss C—— was seated, "and I told her what you said about a Bible for me, and she says if I have one, I can keep it in the straw bed in the room where we sleep. There can't anybody find it there."

A faint flush crossed Mary's thin cheek at these words, but Nellie went on without noticing it.

"And Mary says that perhaps I can have a new calico gown in the spring, if she can get sewing to do. I wish I could, for I don't like to go to Sunday-school with such an old dress as this; it looks awfully."

"How would you like to earn a new dress for yourself, Nellie?" asked Miss C——, smiling at the child's earnestness.

"Why, I couldn't, could I?" and Nellie looked doubtfully from her teacher to Mary, and from Mary back to her teacher again. "What could I do? Wouldn't it cost a great deal of money?"

"I think you can earn it, if you like," said Miss C——. "I will find something for you to do, if you will come to my house this afternoon or to-morrow morning."

"I will be sure to come, Miss C——," said Nellie, "but I am afraid I can't do anything to earn so much money."

Nellie was so much interested in the proposed plan, that she could scarcely keep quiet long enough for Miss C—— to have any conversation with Mary. But Mary was as reserved as Nellie was communicative, and when she spoke of her father, it was evidently with such pain that Miss C—— at once changed the subject.

Nellie was prompt in fulfilling her engagement, and at the appointed hour on the following morning, was ushered into Miss C——'s apartment, where she was furnished with employment for an hour and a half. Her task was by no means difficult, indeed it seemed play-work to the little girl to sort out bright worsteds, and lay each color by itself on strips of white paper prepared for the purpose. This work occupied Nellie for two afternoons, and two more were spent in hemming coarse towels, which she did very nicely; then Miss C—— brought the pretty print, and laid it in Nellie's lap. Never was a child more delighted. She could scarcely believe it was really her own, and as for words to express her thanks, it was utterly impossible, at that moment, to find them. Miss C—— cut off the breadths, and showed Nellie how to run them together; then she fitted the waist, and as a friend of hers came in and offered to assist in the work, before dark it was completed, much to Nellie's satisfaction. She

went home that night with a light heart, and Mary afterwards said that it was past midnight before she closed her eyes to sleep, so happy was she in the thought that she would now be able to appear at the Sunday-school in a decent gown, instead of the poor, ragged clothing that she had worn so long. But a cruel disappointment awaited the poor child; another thorn was planted in her heart by him who should have been her best earthly friend and protector. On Sunday morning, neatly dressed, and with smooth hair, and shining face, Nellie slipped quietly from the small garret where she slept, and passing through the next room, had almost reached the door, when the voice of her father arrested her. He was lying on the floor in front of the fire, as she supposed in a sound sleep, or she would not have dared to leave the house on such an errand.

“Nell, come here!” The voice was indistinct, but harsh, and as the miserable man raised himself on his elbow, poor Nellie trem-

bled, for she knew what his first question would be.

“Where did you get that gown?”

“I worked for a lady and earned it,” replied Nellie, almost in a whisper.

“A likely story that is. Where were you going, my lady, dressed up so fine?”

“I thought I’d go out to walk,” said Nellie, afraid to tell the real truth.

“You just go and take off that gown and bring it to me, the first thing you do, miss,” growled her father, “then you may walk out as much as you have a mind to, provided you don’t come in my way.”

“My old gown is all rags,” said Nellie, bursting into tears. “Won’t you let me keep this, father?”

“I’ll learn you how to dispute what I say, you good for nothing,” cried the infuriated wretch, rising to his feet, and giving Nellie a heavy blow across the shoulders. His hand was raised to repeat it, but Mary sprang forward and seized it ere it fell.

“Strike her again if you dare!” she cried, with flashing eyes. “I will never see her beaten by you—never, father.”

Poor Nellie retreated to her little sleeping room, and took off the pretty dress. Her old ragged gown looked more shabby than ever, but she put it on, and folding the other, carried it to her father, who was threatening Mary with all manner of punishment. At sight of his prize he became more quiet, called Nellie a good girl, and seizing the bundle, hurried from the room as fast as his unsteady limbs would carry him. Then the two sisters sat down and cried in very bitterness of spirit. Presently Nellie wiped her eyes.

“Sister Mary,” she said, “mother used to pray when father treated her ill; let’s we pray, and may be we won’t feel so bad.”

“I can’t,” replied Mary, “I don’t dare to pray to God, when I feel so hard towards father.”

“Perhaps we sha’n’t feel so if we pray,” urged Nellie. “Miss C—— said that Jesus

loves us when we are sinners, and will help us to be good if we ask him. Won't you try to pray, Mary?"

"No, I cannot."

"Then I will," said Nellie, and falling on her knees, she asked God to forgive them for their hard thoughts towards their father, and to make him a better man.

Mary, who told the story to Miss C——, said it made her cry all the more to hear her sister's simple prayer, but they were not bitter or angry tears, and when Nellie rose from her knees, they both felt stronger and more cheerful than they had for many a day. So the sorrow and disappointment of the morning proved to be a rich blessing, since it taught these motherless ones to whom to look for comfort.

The story of poor Nellie's disappointment soon reached the ears of her teacher, who determined to seek an interview with Mr. Robinson, and learn for herself whether his case were utterly hopeless. Accordingly, she

called at No. 8, Grover's Place, early one morning, and was so fortunate as to find him at home, and more sober than was usually the case. He was just preparing to go out, and looked up surprised when Miss C——, after extending her hand, said to him,

“I called to see you on business, this morning, if you are at leisure, Mr. Robinson.”

It was the first time in many years that any one had called him Mr. Robinson, and as for business, no one had had any with him for a long time, except the miserable men who were hurrying him on to destruction. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that he stood staring in the lady's face, doubtful whether she was jesting or in earnest, until she spoke again.

“I came early on purpose to see you before you went to your work, but if you are in haste now, just tell me when you will be at leisure, and I will call again.”

“As to that, I'm in no special hurry,” said Mr. Robinson, dropping into a chair, and

pulling off his old hat. "I haven't any work to attend to in particular."

"Ah?" said Miss C——, "I understood that you were an excellent bricklayer."

"Well, I was called so once," and the man hung his head as he spoke. "Yes, I was as good a workman, I suppose, as you will find in the city, but that was five or ten years ago."

"Were you obliged to give up your business on account of ill health?"

Mr. Robinson glanced furtively in his visitor's face, but he read there only genuine sympathy and interest.

"No, ma'am," he said, "I was well enough, but I took to drinking hard, that's the truth of the matter, so I lost my place; then I went on from bad to worse till now, I don't get a job of work once in a six month."

"What a pity!" said Miss C——. "Your case reminds me of that of a friend of mine, Mr. F——. He was a good mechanic, but fell into this same snare of intemperance, and

in consequence, his employers lost confidence in him, he got out of work, and went on, as you say you have, from bad to worse, leaving his family, and he had a fine family, too, to almost starve. From being a kind and affectionate father, he became so harsh and cruel that his own children were afraid of him ; his good wife died broken-hearted, and it seemed as if my poor friend was really lost to all sense of shame. But there were two or three who had known him in happier days, who could not bear to give him up. They persuaded him to go to the Washingtonian Home ; —perhaps you have heard of it, Mr. Robinson ?”

“No, ma’am, I don’t think I have.”

“Indeed ! why I think it one of the very best institutions in the city. It was established and is supported for the express purpose of helping and encouraging such men as my friend, Mr. F——, to become again honorable and happy members of society. The superintendent is one of the kindest gentle-

men I ever saw ; it is a pleasure just to look upon his face. He receives into this home the very worst cases, and they almost invariably leave it reformed men. I would like to have you see how bright and cheerful everything is in the building, and how kindly those are cared for, who place themselves there as patients. But let me finish my story about Mr. F——,” continued Miss C——, with a smile. “The truth is, when I once begin to talk about the Washingtonian Home, I never know when to stop. Mr. F—— was persuaded to enter the home as a patient ; he remained there two weeks, and came out a reformed man. That was one year ago. He is now doing a good business ; his family are happy ; they have a pleasant home, and are surrounded with all the comforts of life. I heard him speak, two or three weeks ago, in one of the meetings that are held in the chapel of the home, and he said that this past year had been the happiest of his life, for he had felt like a free man. I am sure he told the truth, for it

must be dreadful to be a slave to any evil habit, and his face was so bright that it attested to the truth of what he said. I did not think of telling such a long story, when I came in," continued Miss C——, "but I was reminded of it by what you said in regard to your own case."

"I don't suppose your friend was as bad off as I am," said Mr. Robinson, after a short pause.

"Indeed I think he was," replied Miss C——. "The place where he lived just before he entered the home, was more comfortless than this, and he was, to all appearance, a poor, lost man. Yes; his case was quite as bad as yours."

"And is he a sober man to-day?"

"As much so as any person in this city."

"It wouldn't be of any use for me to try," and Mr. Robinson picked up his hat from the floor; "there's so many to pull a fellow back again, even if he tries to do better. No, it is no use."

“Pray don’t say that,” said Miss C——, earnestly. “There is always use in trying to do well. I dare say you have tried many times, and perhaps you feel discouraged; but if I could persuade you to go to the home, as my friend did, I have no doubt but that you would come away a thoroughly reformed man. Will you think about it?”

“Yes, I will, but I don’t believe they would take me in there, even if I went.”

“Try it, and see,” said Miss C——, smiling. “Try it, and see.”

She shook hands again with the poor man, and bade him good-morning.

Mary, who had listened unobserved to the conversation, from a dark corner of the room, followed her out into the entry, with tears rolling down her cheeks.

“Keep up good courage, dear girl,” said Miss C——; “pray for your poor father, and God willing, we will yet see him a reformed man.”

On Miss C——’s return home after this

visit, she found news awaiting her of the illness of a relative, which called her immediately from the city. She was absent a month, and on her return, her first business was to call upon the family, in whose welfare she felt so deep an interest. Her rap at No. 8, was answered by a hard-featured Irish woman.

"I called to see Mr. Robinson's family," said Miss C——. "Have they moved away from here?"

"Indade, thin, miss, there's no such a man in the house," replied the woman, ungraciously; "it's only meself and the two childher, and Bridget O'Bryan and her four childher, as lives in the place."

"You cannot tell me, then, where the family who lived here before you, have moved?"

"No, miss, I know nothing about 'em; the room was quite empty when I took it."

It was late on Saturday afternoon. Miss C—— decided to wait for further information, until the next morning, for though she scarcely

expected to find Nellie at the Sunday-school, she knew that some one of the teachers would be able to direct her to her new home. The Sunday came, and with it a heavy fall of snow; but Miss C——was not a fair-weather teacher, and the first stroke of the bell found her in her accustomed seat. One after another the members of her class came in, each with a smile and kiss of recognition and pleasure; last of all, just as school was about to commence, came Nellie, but so changed from the pale, thin-cheeked child that she was so short a time ago, that Miss C—— found it difficult to believe that it was indeed she. She was rosy and smiling, and her hat, cloak and gown were new, warm and tasteful, though made of plain, coarse materials; her feet were well protected from the snow by a pair of India rubber boots, and her hands were covered with thick mittens; there was no better dressed child in the school that morning than Nellie Robinson, the drunkard's daughter. After the exercises of the morning, she pressed

up to Miss C——'s side, and whispered in her ear,

“Oh, Miss C——, we are so happy now! Father is so good, and he is at work all the time, and he is kind to Mary and me, and we have moved into another house, on Garden Street, where we have three rooms. Won't you come and see us?”

“Yes, indeed,” said Miss C——; “I am very glad to hear this, Nellie. You may be sure I will call very soon.”

“And father says,” continued the eager child, “that if it hadn't been for you, he would have been as bad as ever, but you spoke to him so kindly, and as if he was still a man, that he felt as though he would try once more. And so he went to the Washington Home, that you told him about, and they treated him so well, and were so gentle with him there, that it helped him a great deal. Then the superintendent found work for him, and engaged the rooms on Garden Street, away from those wicked men that were

always urging him to drink. So when he came away from the home, he had nothing to do but to go to work, and Mary and I try to have everything pleasant for him at home, and he stays in all the evenings, except when he goes to the temperance meetings, and then we always go with him ; he likes to have us."

Such was Nellie's artless story, which was soon authenticated by a visit to the new home. Miss C—— "thanked God and took courage;" and so let all others who are trying to help in the great work of raising the fallen. True, it is not often that such success crowns even the most faithful labor, but efforts earnestly and prayerfully made, with faithful reliance upon God's promises, will sooner or later prove successful.

VII.

DISCOURAGEMENT.

THE experiences of the mission-school teacher are necessarily of a sad rather than a bright character. His work leads him into the dark places, where God's sunshine seldom comes, and among the outcasts of society, who oftener look upon him as an infringer of their liberties than a friend who seeks their good. He must see sights and hear sounds from which his soul shrinks in horror; he must be prepared to meet misery and wretchedness in their worst and most painful forms; he must be willing to take the most ignorant and depraved by the hand if he would help in the great work of raising the fallen and bringing them where the sunlight of God's truth will shine upon their darkness.

“You must find great amusement in your visits to the poor,” remarked a good lady to me one day. “Isn’t it really picturesque to see little bare-footed children, and the places where they live?”

“Heaven knows, madam,” I replied, with an emphasis that seemed to shock her sensitive nerves, “there is little that can be called picturesque, still less amusing, in the homes of the wretchedly poor in our city. A week’s experience among them would disabuse you of any such idea more effectually than any assurances of mine to that effect.”

Indeed, if one enters upon mission work with the idea that it is easy or pleasant, he will inevitably find himself mistaken. If he expects a speedy return for his labors in the improved condition, either temporal or spiritual, of those whom he wishes to benefit, he will also as a rule, find himself mistaken. This work, more than any other, requires “patient continuance,” for you meet disappointments where you least expect them, deception

where you looked for frankness, ingratitude in return for kindnesses shown, rebuffs and sneers from the very ones whom you are trying to serve. And yet, this work is most blessed when entered upon and engaged in, in the strength of the Lord, and for his sake. Look upon these poor souls as bearing his impress, though marred and defaced, as capable of being raised to a likeness with him, and the work becomes invested with a dignity, and a glory unspeakable. These reflections were especially called forth by a visit that I received one morning from a young and enthusiastic girl, who had just begun to labor in the Lord's vineyard as a mission-school teacher. She had expected that her path would be strewn with roses, and when she found instead, that thorns were springing up beneath her feet, she was tempted to turn aside, and choose a different way.

"Why, Miss S——," she said, and tears of disappointment and sorrow stood in her eyes, "I never knew anything like the de-

ception of that child, Minny James! I wouldn't have believed any one capable of deceiving me so."

"What was the story, my dear girl?" I asked. "Isn't Minny James the little slender child with yellow hair who always sits next you in school?"

"Yes, the very same, and I thought her so good and lovely, so superior to the other members of my class! But I will tell you the whole story, Miss S——, and I am sure you will not wonder that I am discouraged. I liked Minny the very first time I saw her, which was about a month ago; she was so pretty, and her manners were so quiet and lady-like compared with the most of our scholars. She was very poorly dressed when she came to me and said that her father was sick with consumption, and her mother had hard work to earn bread for the family of nine children, the youngest of whom was an infant not quite six weeks old. Of course, I pitied the poor woman, so I had Minny come

to my house, and mamma and I fitted her with a new suit of clothes throughout; we made quantities of garments, too, for the younger children, for Minny said that she was the eldest of the family, and there has been no end to the tea and sugar and bread and butter that mamma has sent by her to them all. Now you shake your head, Miss S——, and I know what that means. You think I ought to have gone to Minny's home and learned the truth for myself, but in the first place, she seemed so honest that I never thought of doubting her word; in the second place, I cannot bear to go to such places, and see sick people, I never know what to say or do for them; and in the third place, mamma always objects to my visiting the poor, she is so afraid of contagion. I was quite surprised when she gave her consent for me to take a class in the mission-school. Well, to go back to my story: yesterday Minny came to the house as usual, for we have had her come every day to get what was left from dinner

the previous day, and in addition to the cold meat and vegetables mamma put a tumbler of jelly, and a bottle of currant wine in the basket for her sick father. You smile, Miss S——, and so did Aunt Roxy who is visiting us.”

“Where do you live, little girl?” she asked, just as Minny was going out at the door.

“On Myrtle Street, No. 46,” said Minny, starting and blushing.

Aunt Roxy didn’t ask any other question then, but we told her all about the family, and how poor they were.

“And have you never visited them?” she inquired, pushing up her spectacles and looking hard at me.

I told her no, I never had.

“Well,” said she, “just put on your hat and cloak, Emma, and you and I will go together the first thing we do.”

Mamma made no objection, since Aunt Roxy wished it, and in a few minutes we set

out. Of course we found Myrtle Street without any difficulty, and No. 46, a very small wooden house, unpainted and dismal enough.

"Why, a'n't you going to knock?" I asked, as Aunt Roxy pushed open the outer door.

"Yes, all in good time," she answered, stepping lightly along the dark entry, I following close behind.

At the inner door she gave a light rap, and then pushed it open, and what do you think, Miss S——, met our view? There, at a well-spread table sat Minny, two great, stout red-faced men, and two women, equally stout and red-faced. They were so much engaged in eating, talking and laughing, that we stood quite unobserved for a minute or two.

"This wine is rather weak, but it will do very well," said one of the men, with an oath, as he emptied a glass.

"Yes," said one of the women, "be sure you tell the lady that it did your father a deal of good, and ask her if she can let him have another bottle."

"I'll tell her," said Minny, laughing as loud as the rest, "and I'll get it fast enough, you may be sure."

"Tell her, Minny, that the doctor has ordered whisky," said the second man, chucking her under the chin, "and that your mother has no money to buy it with."

"That's just it," cried the others, with another burst of coarse laughter.

At that moment Aunt Roxy rapped again on the door, and coolly entered the room. Never did I behold such a change as came over Minny's face, as she saw who the visitors were. The bold look faded away, and the color mounted to the roots of her hair, as she said in a whisper,

"It is Miss Milman," and fled from the room.

No one spoke for a full minute; then Aunt Roxy, speaking in a grave, severe tone of voice, said,

"I came with my niece to see the man who is sick with consumption. Where is he?"

No one answered, but the women exchanged glances, and the men followed Minny out of the room.

“I also came to see nine small children, and their mother, who is in feeble health. Where are they?” and Aunt Roxy looked about the well furnished room.

Still no answer, but one of the women dropped her head, ashamed, while the other, and coarser of the two, stood with arms akimbo, staring first at Aunt Roxy and then at me.

“Where are they?” repeated Aunt Roxy, in a tone that said plainly, I will not leave this place until I know the truth.

“You will have to ask somebody besides me,” at length replied the woman, who had partly concealed her face; “Minny is no relation to me.”

“She is to me,” cried the other, evidently taking courage from her companion’s words. “I’m her mother; as for her father, I don’t know where he is, or whether he’s anywhere.

She's the only child I've got, and she's a plucky one, too, I can tell you."

These words were interlarded with horrible oaths, and accompanied by such an expression of countenance, that I begged Aunt Roxy to come away. I was never so frightened in my life, and only wanted to get out of the horrible den of thieves and liars.

"In a minute," said Aunt Roxy; but before she left, she said a few words to those women that I don't think they will soon forget.

"Now, Miss S——," concluded Emma, "do you wonder that I feel discouraged? and what shall I do?"

"It is indeed a very trying case," I said, "and I cannot wonder that you feel somewhat disheartened. Perhaps it will be best for another teacher to look after Minny, for of course we must not give her up, and since we know the story we will be on our guard. It is sad for a child to be thus taught from her infancy to deceive, and to feel no shame in it.

But I think this will prove an excellent lesson to you, my dear girl, and one that you will not soon forget."

We did not give Minny up. She stayed away from school a number of Sabbaths, but was finally persuaded to return to us, and although we do not yet feel that we may put confidence in her word, yet we hope that the truth, accompanied by the influences of the Holy Spirit, may in time bring her to see her sin, and lead her to Jesus for pardon, and grace to overcome this habit of her childhood.

VIII.

THE YOUNG MEN'S CLASS.

IT was nearly a year after our mission-school was formed, that five young men appeared one morning in the hall, and expressed a wish to become members of the school. Of course we were glad to see them, but who would be their teacher? Every one shrunk from a task which involved so much responsibility; but at length a lady was found who consented to undertake the work. The young men were apparently from eighteen to twenty-one years of age, and judging from their countenances, we were compelled to doubt the honesty of their motives in thus joining a school which was under the sole charge of ladies, and composed mostly of children under thirteen years of age. Their

deportment, however, was correct enough; they paid respectful attention to their teacher, and although they could not be induced to prepare a lesson during the week, yet they were willing, when in school, to look over such passages of Scripture as Miss Hale selected for them. We all felt that this class was important, but I believe that none of us, except the teacher, had much faith that the word spoken would accomplish the desired effect of bringing them to Christ. She never wavered from the day on which she assumed her charge, but gave herself up to the work with a hopeful enthusiasm that put us to the blush. I think, nay, I am sure, that the secret of Miss Hale's success was her implicit reliance upon God's promises, and her constant prayers. Always somewhat reserved when speaking of herself, I yet learned that it was her constant practice to commit to the Lord the case of each of her scholars by name, every day. No matter how much pressed she was for time, one hour was kept sacred for

this object. The entire result of her prayers and labors, their influence upon the class, and indirectly, upon others, eternity alone will reveal, but enough of encouragement has already gladdened her heart to more than repay her for all that she has done. Two members of her class are lying in Southern graves. They were brave soldiers in the Union army; one fell on the field of battle, the other met his death in the prison at Andersonville. Of the first, we never heard directly after he left us, but a comrade said that he read in his Testament every day, and that he never heard him utter an oath all the while they were together; but of the second, John F——, we had more direct and certain intelligence. He was a youth of frank address and good impulses, though up to the time of his enlistment he had given no evidence of special interest in religion. Just before he entered the army, Miss Hale invited him to her house, and after a long and serious conversation, she committed him to God in prayer. What was

her surprise, when, as she was about to rise from her knees, she heard his voice taking up the petition, and asking God's blessing, not only on himself, but on his teacher and the members of the class, from whom he was so soon to be separated.

"Why, John," she said, with tears in her eyes, when his prayer was ended, "what does this mean? Are you going to be a Christian?"

"I hope so," he replied, seriously; "I want to be,—and, God helping me, I mean to be. I feel as though I may be going to meet my death in battle, and I know I am not fit to die."

Going from home with this resolution, it will be supposed that Miss Hale felt a very deep and tender interest in his welfare; she wrote to him often, and received very hopeful letters from him in return. Long before he was taken prisoner, he had written that he was rejoicing in hope, and that he found the service of Christ most blessed, even in the

army. He felt deeply interested in the young men with whom he had been associated in the mission-school, and prayed much for their conversion, besides writing to those who still remained at home, and begging them to forsake their sinful ways, and give their hearts to God.

The sufferings of our poor soldiers in the rebel prisons are too well known to require more than a passing allusion here. John F——was starved to death, but as long as strength and reason remained, he praised God, and sought comfort in prayer. Oh, teacher! was not the birth of this one soul into the kingdom of heaven “an overpayment of delight,” to her who had hoped, and waited, and labored so long?

A third member of the young men’s class, James Drew by name, enlisted in the navy, and we have never heard of him since. Whether he perished in some engagement, or died of disease, or whether he still lives, we know not.

Albert C——, another scholar, was in the army a short time, but being stricken down with severe sickness, he lay in the hospital for months, and was at last brought home to die. A love of intoxicating drinks had been from boyhood his besetting sin, and the indulgence of this appetite had so weakened a naturally delicate constitution, that he had no power to resist disease. A rapid consumption terminated his days. During his sickness, Miss Hale was a constant visitor. She brought beautiful flowers and delicious fruit to brighten his room, and tempt his feeble appetite; she sat beside him, and read to him from God's word such passages as were suited to his condition, and many were the prayers that she offered in his behalf, during those last days of his life. From apparent carelessness and indifference, the young man seemed at length to awake to a sense of his true condition, both temporal and spiritual, and to realize his need of preparation for the great change that awaited him. He became serious and

thoughtful, and was not only willing, but desirous to converse on the subject of personal religion. He manifested a wish to become a Christian, but doubted the willingness of Christ to forgive such a sinner as he now felt himself to be. The burden of his sins rested heavily upon him, and it was not until within a few days of his death, that light began to break through the clouds, and he could say with St. Paul, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." The last hours of this young man were quiet and peaceful. His trust in Jesus was simple and humble, and from the time he felt himself forgiven, unwavering.

"Would you like to get well again, Albert, if it were God's will?" asked Miss Hale, one day.

"If it were God's will, I hope it would be my will," replied the poor fellow, "but I have no wish to live. I know myself so well, that I am afraid I would fall into sin again.

It has always been so easy for me to give in when tempted to drink, that I can't bear to think of the possibility, even, of getting over this sickness, and going out into the world again. Oh, no, I want to go home to heaven, where I will be delivered from my sins."

Not many days after this, Albert's desire was granted, and he went home, as we trust, a ransomed soul.

The history of the fifth and last member of Miss Hale's class, is briefly written. Seth Shannon was most unprepossessing in his appearance, and seemed by far the least impressible of the five young men. He had been subject from childhood to epileptic fits, and this, together with the free use of tobacco and strong drink, had so weakened both body and mind, that he was almost an imbecile. The teacher was faithful to her charge, but nothing that she said appeared to affect him in the slightest degree. He was the only one of the class who was not in some way connected with the army or navy, and long

after they left, he continued to come regularly to the school, sometimes bringing with him a companion, but oftener quite alone.

This was encouraging, to be sure, and Miss Hale tried to comfort herself with the thought that there was hope for poor Seth, faint as it seemed, so long as he put himself in the way of receiving instruction. She redoubled her efforts in his behalf, the more especially, as she found that his health was rapidly failing, and the conviction was thus forced upon her that whatsoever was to be done for him, must be done quickly.

At last a Sunday came when Seth was not found in his accustomed seat, and the story passed from one child to another that Seth Shannon was very sick, and his folks all said that he was going to die. Miss Hale at once visited his home, and found the story was true. Old Mr. Shannon sat by the fire, more than half intoxicated. He took his pipe from his mouth as the teacher entered, and said,

“S’pose you’ve come to see Seth? He a’n’t going to live but a little while, and I’m powerful glad of it, for he’s no comfort to himself or to anybody else. It’ll be a good thing for me and the old woman when he’s out o’ the way.”

The “old woman” cried a little, not much, and waited upon Miss Hale into the next room, where the sick man lay. He was asleep, and she would not have him disturbed, though his mother declared that it wouldn’t hurt him.

“Does he know how very sick he is?” asked Miss Hale looking sadly on the red, bloated face.

“Well, yes, he does,” replied Mrs. Shannon; “yes, he knows it.”

“Does he feel willing to die?”

“As to that, I can’t say. I never thought of asking him, and it wouldn’t be much use if I did, for he won’t say much anyway.”

“I wish I could feel that he is prepared for death,” said Miss Hale, and the tears came to her eyes as she spoke.

“Well, there,” said Mrs. Shannon, “I wouldn’t cry about it, if I was you. He’s a poor, misfortunate fellow, and likely he’ll be full as well off in the next world as he has been in this. I don’t mean to worry about it, anyway.”

Miss Hale turned away, and left the house. What, indeed, could she say to this woman, or to the man who sat stupidly by the fire, with his pipe in his mouth? Even natural feeling seemed dead in their breasts. On the following day the visit was repeated, but Seth was gone beyond the reach of hope. He was sleeping his last sleep, and it remained to his teacher only to follow his body to the grave.

Thus hastily have I sketched the histories of the five young men who composed Miss Hale’s first class. Not one of them is left, unless, indeed, James Drew is still living, but this we cannot tell. There is a second young men’s class now in the school and under the care of the same teacher. We watch it with

deep and ever-growing interest, and our united prayer is that every one of its members may be led to the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

IX.

THE CANDY-GIRLS.

IT was a splendid jewelry establishment into which I followed a friend, one bleak December morning. As we entered the door the warmth of summer greeted us ; beautiful pictures smiled down upon us from the walls ; rare gems flashed and glittered in their velvet cases ; obsequious clerks attended upon the ladies, whose carriages waited at the door. It was a scene of luxury and beauty, but it was marred by one blot, in the person of a child, a slender, ragged child, who, with a basket on her arm, was slowly making her way towards the door. As she met us, she raised the cover, and timidly asked,

“Buy some candy?”

Before I had time to answer. a rough, mas-

culine voice arrested both the child and myself.

“Here!”

We glanced at the frowning face, and the finger pointing to the door.

“Clear out!”

With an evil look the little girl obeyed, muttering as she went. It was a bitterly cold day, and I saw that she had no stockings on her feet, only a small shawl over her shoulders, and an old ragged hood on her head; her little hands, too, were purple with the cold. I turned, and followed her out of the store.

“Little girl!”

She stopped, and looked up in my face.

“How do you sell your candy?”

“A cent a stick—twelve for ten cents.”

“How much have you sold to-day?”

“Not any; they won’t let me stop in their old stores, and nobody will buy in the street, it is so awful cold, and I don’t know what to do.”

“Why not go home? Perhaps it will be milder to-morrow. It is too cold for you to be out with such thin clothing.”

“I can’t go home till I have sold all I’ve got here. I shall get an awful licking if I do.”

“Then you are not at work for yourself?”

“No, I sell it for mother. She buys of old Green at the corner of our street, and then I take one basket and Isie the other, and we have got to go out with it, and sell it all ’fore night.”

“And what does your mother do for a living?”

“Stays in the lager-beer saloon, and drinks most all the time. Won’t you buy some candy, Miss?”

“Yes; you may let me have two dozen sticks.”

O! how the bitter little face brightened.

“Thank you, Miss. Can’t you give me twenty cents, instead of twenty-five? I haven’t got any change.”

“Never mind. I don’t want any change. Now tell me where you live?”

She gave me the street and number, also her name, Lulie Fleming, and with another “thank you,” went on her way.

In visiting her home, soon after this interview, I found that Lulie had exaggerated nothing in the brief account she had given me. It was late in the afternoon when I found the place and number, and rapped at the door, which was opened by “Isie,” who was already home from her day’s work. She was older than Lulie by some three or four years, a very sickly-looking girl. The secret of her success in so soon selling her little stock of candy, she gave in these touching words, “I look so poorly they pity me!” How could any one refuse pity and aid? thought I, as I noted the hectic flush on her sunken cheeks, and the feverish brilliance of her eyes, and listened to the dry, hacking cough that seemed to rack the slight figure almost beyond endurance.

"Lulie has not come home yet?" I said, looking about the room, the poor, comfortless room.

"No, ma'am; she scarce ever gets in as early as me. Do you know Lulie?"

"A little. I saw her in the street a day or two ago, and had a few minutes' talk with her."

"She's real good to me."

"I am glad of it. Where is your mother?"

"She doesn't stay at home much," replied Isie, while a deeper flush dyed her cheek.

"Did you want to see her?"

"Not particularly. I thought I would call and inquire whether I could help you in any way. Can I?"

"No, ma'am," said Isie, hopelessly; "there's nothing any one can do to help us much, so long as mother is what she is. We couldn't keep much in the house if we had it, for she sells all she can lay her hands on for drink. I wish she wouldn't, but it has

always been so. If me and Lulie can earn enough to pay the rent, and get something to eat, we feel glad."

"You ought to have warmer clothing, both of you, but especially you who are so delicate," I said, for poor Isie's gown was quite as thin as Lulie's, and the shawl, which she still kept over her shoulders, was worn quite threadbare.

"It won't be long I'll need it," replied Isie, with a sad smile, "and I've got so used to the cold that I don't mind it much now."

"You speak as though you were not expecting to live long," I said. "Do you feel willing to die?"

"Oh, yes, ma'am, I want to. There's nothing I want to live for, only Lulie will miss me some at first, of course; but she'll soon get over it, and no one else 'll care."

"But Isie, it is a solemn thing to die."

"I don't think so," said Isie. "I think it will be so nice to go to sleep, and never wake

up again. I shall be glad when it comes time, for I'm all tired out."

"Poor girl!" and I took her wasted hand in mine. "You must wake up again. You have another life to live, when this is over."

"What!" and Isie stared in my face, with her eager, questioning eyes.

"Only this body of yours will sleep in the grave," I answered, speaking slowly, for thoughts were crowding upon her faster than she had strength to receive them. "Only this weak, sick, tired body of yours will sleep in the grave. Your soul—the part of you that thinks and loves and hates—will never die. It must live forever."

"Where?" gasped Isie. "O, I hope it a'n't true. I don't want it to be true. I don't want to live any more. Will it be in this world that I shall live? Who told you about it, ma'am?"

"When your body dies, my child, your soul will leave this world for another. The Bible tells us so, and the Bible is God's word."

“But where is the other world that I shall live in? Did you ever see it? Have you been there? Shall I be sick and tired there?” Isie’s questions came with feverish haste and eagerness, interrupted only by her hard cough.

“My dear girl,” I said, “if God is your Father and Christ your Saviour, your home will be in heaven with saints and angels, and you will be happy forever. In heaven no one ever says I am sick; there is no pain or weariness there, but all is joy and peace. Would you like such a home as this?”

“Oh, yes,” said Isie, clasping her hands. “Tell me more about it. What must I do to go there?”

As plainly as I was able, I told this poor girl the story of Jesus Christ, often interrupted by her questions, which were the questions of a little child, so ignorant was she of the Bible. Lulie came in while we were talking, and listened almost as eagerly as her sister to what was said. I stayed with

them until the shades of evening gathered in the room, and the lamps were lit in the street; then, after obtaining a promise that they would be at the Mission Hall on the next Sunday, I said "Good night," leaving them in their comfortless home, while I went to the warmth and bounty of my own.

"God! who hast given unto some rich temporal blessings, and to others poverty and want, bestow upon those a liberal spirit, which shall make them the faithful stewards of thy bounty; and to these grant a patient and child-like confidence in thy wisdom and fatherly care, which shall keep them from sin and despair."

This was the petition that rose from my heart, as I entered my own door, and thought of the two suffering children from whom I had just parted. What was I, that I should enjoy all the comforts of life, while they were left in poverty and ignorance? Hard problem! God alone can solve it.

The case of Isie Fleming and her sister in-

terested me deeply. They came together to the mission-school as they had promised, clad in their poor, thin garments and shivering with cold, but eager to learn more of the glad tidings of salvation. I never knew a more attentive listener than Isie, or one who received the truth more willingly. Truly hers was the trusting, unquestioning spirit of the little child, and as I watched her from week to week, I felt that she was fast ripening for the kingdom of heaven. Isie continued in the school until early spring, when her cough became so bad, and other symptoms so alarming, that she was obliged to forego a privilege that she valued most highly.

Mrs. Fleming still continued in her evil courses, unaffected by the appeals which were frequently urged to induce her to reform. Even the motherly instinct seemed dead in her breast, for when she found that Isie could no longer perform her accustomed labor, she gave a very willing assent to her removal from her own wretched abode.

We found just the home we wanted for the dying girl—a quiet, comfortable room with a Christian widow whose only daughter had recently died of consumption, and whose heart was all ready to take in this poor young girl, so soon to follow. Lulie went with her sister, against her mother's consent. Neither threats nor entreaties could change her determination to stay by Isie as long as she lived. She was a wilful but affectionate child, and every thought seemed centered in the one being who had always been kind and gentle with her.

“Mother has beat me till I couldn't stand,” she said to her teacher one day, “she has sworn at me, and 'most starved me, and she's sent me into the street when it was storming so hard that I'd get wet to my skin in five minutes; she never spoke a kind word to me, but Isie was always good and kind. Isie and me have always kept together, and we always will, just as long as God lets her live. As for mother, I never mean to go back to her. I'll

work for my own self and try to do right, but I never can if I stay with her."

The truth that poor Lulie spoke could not be contradicted. The mother's home, which should have been a sweet and sacred spot, was no home for this child, and so, as I have said, Lulie was allowed to go with her sister.

Isie lingered until the last of May, and we who had been professed disciples of Christ for years, learned many a lesson of patience and trust by her sick bed. It seemed as though the Lord were making up to her in tenderness of love and richness of experience for the years that she had spent in ignorance of him. Her communion with him was so real that she spoke of it as she spoke of her interviews with Christian friends.

"How are you to-day, Isie?" I asked one morning.

"Very well, thank you."

Isie never complained of pain or weakness. She was always "very well."

“Did you have a good night’s rest?”

“Yes, beautiful,” and her eyes brightened as she spoke. “I didn’t sleep much, but Jesus sat beside me all through the hours I was awake, and I rested. Oh, isn’t it good in him, Miss Jessie, to take such care of a poor girl like me?”

“Yes, Isie, he is good beyond our power to express. But did you cough much in the night?”

“Not much. I was afraid I should, and I didn’t want to because I knew it would wake Lulie or Mrs. Green; but I didn’t have a real bad spell till almost morning.”

“What were you thinking about while you were awake?”

“I wasn’t thinking much, Miss Jessie; I was resting, and listening to Jesus.”

“Can you tell me what he said to you?”

“I don’t like to talk much about it,” replied Isie, hesitating. “It seems as though what he says to me is my message, and I ought to keep it to myself. He gives you



"No, ma'am, thank you. . . . I'm earning my own living!"
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your message, don't he, Miss Jessie? and it is just what you need. I think he has a message for everybody that loves him and will listen to it, and each one gets just what is best for himself or herself."

"I am afraid all are not quite as quick to hear the messages of the Lord as you are, Isie."

"Then it must be because they don't feel how much they need them," said Isie. "I need them most of anything in the world, and I couldn't be contented without them. I don't see," she added after a short pause, "how I ever lived all those years without having Jesus for a friend. I can remember plain enough how discouraged and miserable I used to feel, and all I wanted was to lay down somewhere and sleep forever. O, I felt dreadfully that day when you told me that I must live in another world. Everything seemed so dark to me, even when you explained to me about my soul. I didn't shut my eyes to sleep that night for thinking of

what you had told me, and wishing it mightn't be true."

"That was before you believed in Jesus Christ as your Saviour. 'The gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord,' and a most blessed gift it is."

"O, yes," said Isie, smiling. "Eternal life with him who is so good and kind and loving! I can hardly realize it yet, but I know it is so, and I shall realize it there, if I do not here."

It was thus that Isie loved to talk with us who took delight in visiting her. But we knew that the time was fast hastening on when she must leave us for the home towards which she looked with unspeakable joy. It was just at sunset of a fair May day when Isie died. She had seemed much more comfortable for a day or two past, and Lulie had begun to cherish the hope that health was returning, notwithstanding Mrs. Green's tearful assurance that it was always so in consumption. Isie's teacher was with her when she

died, and Lulie and Mrs. Green were also present. She said but little in those closing hours of her life, but that little was joyous and full of triumphal faith. Miss F—— sang at her request a hymn that had been very dear to her, and which she had often asked to have sung or repeated during her sickness—

“I’m but a stranger here,
Heaven is my home,”

and she tried to join in the last verse, but her voice was too faint and weak for such an effort.

“I shall soon sing in heaven,” she whispered with a smile.

The friends who watched her could scarcely tell when Isie breathed her last. It seemed to them as though she had fallen asleep, and it was long before the weeping Lulie could be made to believe that she would never wake again on earth.

“So he giveth his beloved sleep,” I thought,

as I gazed upon the quiet, peaceful face of Isie Fleming, and praised God for his abounding grace. Lately, so worn and weary and hopeless, longing only for the sleep of the grave; now released from the tired body, a joyous, ransomed spirit singing on her way to glory. How marvellous the change! Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light;" he hath given this hope which is as "an anchor to the soul."

All was bright now for Isie, but poor Lulie was inconsolable. Her grief was so intense and violent, that we began to fear for her health, as she was a delicate child. The kind providence, however, that had so lovingly watched over the sick and dying girl, was kindly watching over the little mourner, and preparing a home for her, where she would find friends and sympathy. Fifty miles distant from the city, in a quiet country town, lived a Christian gentlewoman, Mrs. Graham by name. She was a distant relative of Miss F——, Lulie's teacher, and it so happened

that a few weeks after Isie's death, she visited the city. Miss F—— invited her to come into the school one morning, and her tender sympathies were at once enlisted for the pale, sad-eyed girl, whose face never once brightened with the smiles so natural to childhood. On learning her history Mrs. Graham at once determined to take her to her own pleasant home. The offer was thankfully accepted, and in a few days we bid Lulie good-bye. This was four or five years ago. Lulie is now a well educated, modest, pious young woman, the adopted daughter of the lady who so kindly befriended her. She is leading a useful life in the sphere to which Providence has called her, and is beloved by all who know her, whether rich or poor.

X.

THE NEWS-BOY.

“JOURNAL, five o’clock, Herald ’n Transcript?”

Quite unlike the usual shrill voices of the news-boys, were the sweet, rich tones that fell on my ear as I was hurrying up Washington Street one cool October evening. They at once arrested my attention, and glancing around, I saw a sturdy little figure standing at the entrance of the theatre, and met a pair of bright brown eyes, which lighted up a very intelligent countenance.

“Have a paper, ma’am? Journal, five o’clock, Herald ’n Transcript.”

“I don’t think I want a paper. I shall find one waiting for me when I reach home.” Then touched by the look of disappointment

written on the expressive face, I added, "Here are three cents for you, and you may sell your paper to some one else."

"No, ma'am, thank you," said the boy, stepping back, and putting his disengaged hand behind him, "I don't want them. I'm earning my own living!"

Slipping the pennies back into my pocket, with added interest I inquired,

"What is your name, my young friend?"

"Peter Donaldson, ma'am."

"Where do you live?"

"On ——— street, with my mother."

"Do you attend Sunday-school?"

"No, ma'am."

"I'd like to call on your mother and you some day, Peter. When would I be most likely to find you both at home?"

"Mother goes out washing, but she's always home by dark, and I get in about eight or half-past; but I don't think you'd like to come and see us."

"Why not?"

“O ’cause we’re poor folks, and we don’t have nice things, that’s all. You can come if you want to.”

“I do want to very much,” I said, amused by the independence and frankness of the boy. “You may expect me some evening this week, so be sure you are in by eight o’clock.”

The next day and the next were stormy, and it was Saturday evening before I was able to fulfil my engagement to visit the home of Mrs. Donaldson and her boy Peter. I met with no trouble in finding the place. It was a square room, up one flight of stairs, certainly not in a very desirable location, and yet better than most of the tenement houses that I know. The door was opened by a slender little woman, tidily dressed in a rusty black gown, with smooth black hair, parted on her forehead, and fastened by side combs in little rolls on each cheek, Peter’s mother, I was sure at the first glance. She opened the door wider when she saw who her visitor was, and gave me a cordial invitation to enter.

“You must be the lady that told my son you would come and see us,” she said, setting a chair. “Peter came right home and told me, and he has been expecting you every night since, though I knew you wouldn’t come in the rain.”

“What a pleasant, cheerful home you have here!” I could not help saying, as I glanced around me. Everything looked so neat, from the nicely made bed in one corner, to the row of dishes that were visible through the open closet door. The supper table still stood in the floor, and the tea pot on the stove was singing a song for somebody.

“Well, it is pleasant,” said Mrs. Donaldson, also looking around the room. “I work pretty hard to make it so, but I like to keep my boy at home, and how can I do it, unless I make it comfortable for him? We haven’t a very nice neighborhood, but we don’t mind that so much, since it is nice when we once get inside of our own walls; besides, the neighbors a’n’t so very bad; they’re mostly

honest folks, only they a'n't just the kind that I like for companions for myself or for Peter."

"Peter has not got in yet, I see."

"No, ma'am, I am expecting him every minute. You see I have kept his supper and my own, too, waiting for him. To tell the truth," and here Mrs. Donaldson smiled, "I'm such a goose that I can't bear to eat till he gets here; even my tea don't taste good, unless I have him here to drink a cup with me."

"I can understand that very well," I said. "It is not pleasant to sit down alone at the table."

"That's what it isn't," said Mrs. Donaldson, "'specially if you can have good company by waiting, and my boy is as good company as anybody need care to have: he is so full of fun, and he loves to cheer me up with his jokes and queer sayings, when he comes home and finds me tired."

"You work pretty hard, I suppose?"

“Well, yes, I do ; some days harder than others ; but then I expect to work, and I am glad I have the strength for it—I’m sure I have the will.”

“Peter is at work, too ; you must between you make a comfortable living ?”

“Yes, we do, but we want to do more ’n that. Peter is a great lover of his book, and he’s determined to go to school, so we are trying to lay up money for him to do it. Why, you don’t know,” continued Mrs. Donaldson, waxing communicative as she saw my interest in her boy, “you don’t know what a scholar he is ! He reads aloud in the evening, after supper, and it might as well be Latin or Greek for all I can understand of it, but then he likes it, and it is pleasant to hear his voice, and I know he will be a great scholar, if he can only have a chance at his books as he wants to.”

The fond mother was here interrupted by the entrance of Peter himself. He looked pleased, and took off his hat when he saw

me, but seemed at first rather shy and ill at ease.

“You see I have kept my word, Peter,” I said; “have you sold all your papers, to-day?”

“All but two or three. I ’most always sell them off before I come home.”

Here ensued a little talk about the work of mother and son, from which I gathered that by the strictest economy they were enabled to save about nine shillings of their weekly earnings for the object so dear to Peter’s heart. This was all very good, and I was pleased to see such thrift and ambition, and yet there seemed something lacking.

“Where do you attend church, Mrs. Donaldson?” I inquired, after listening with interest to their story.

“Well, we don’t go anywhere,” she replied, hesitating. “I get very tired working so hard all the week through, and Peter gets tired, too, and we haven’t clothes fitting to wear, so we stay here at home, and he reads

and I rest, so as to be ready to go at it again on Monday. I don't know but it is just as well for us, as if we went to meeting."

"Really, I do not think so," I ventured to say. "The soul needs food as well as the body, and if it doesn't have it, it will starve, and let me tell you, my friend, a starved soul is a sad thing. I wish I could persuade you to attend church; and you, Peter, won't you come to Sunday-school with me to-morrow? It is from nine to half-past ten in the morning, and again in the afternoon from one to half-past two. I promise that you shall learn something that will be of more real value to you than anything you can read at home, unless, indeed, you read from the same book we use in the Sunday-school. Have you a Bible?"

"No, ma'am."

"We used to have one, a good while ago," said Mrs. Donaldson, "but it some way got lost when we moved. I never saw it after we came here."

"If you will be at school to-morrow morning, Peter, I will take care that you have a new Bible to bring home for your mother and yourself. Will you come?"

"I would, if it wasn't for my clothes," said Peter, looking down on his thoroughly patched jacket and pants. "They a'n't fit."

"Yes, they are," said I, "they are whole and clean, and these are the main points. Will you come?"

"I don't know but I will, if you think they will answer," and again Peter surveyed them doubtfully.

"Certainly they will. I shall expect to see you at nine o'clock; now don't let me be disappointed."

"He will keep his word if he gives it," said Mrs. Donaldson, holding the candle in the entry for me to see the way down over the stairs. "I can always depend upon him."

It was a dark evening, and I made my way home as quickly as possible through the still

busy streets. Just as I reached my door, I was surprised to hear Peter's voice, not far from my elbow—

“Good night, miss, I'll be there to-morrow,” and without waiting for a word in return, he shot away, whistling merrily as he ran. Then I knew that he had followed at a little distance to see that I got safely home.

Right pleased was I to see Peter Donaldson seated by the door as I entered the hall on Sunday. He looked as bright and fresh as the morning, with his clear, healthy complexion and his dark hair brushed smoothly back from his forehead; and the smile with which he greeted me was really beautiful. Never had I met a child who attracted me at first sight as this child had, both by his voice and manner, and I felt confident that we would be amply repaid for whatever of care or labor we might bestow upon him, by the improvement he was sure to make. The Bible was a new book to Peter. He was as unfamiliar with its contents as the most ignorant

child in school, but his face beamed with pleasure when it was handed to him, and he was told that it was his own.

"I hope you will read a few verses in it every day," said the lady in whose class he had been placed. "You will find it full of beautiful and interesting stories, and also of instruction that you need."

"I will read it," said Peter.

The next Sunday found Peter again in his place, with his Bible in his hand, smiling and happy as before.

"I like this Bible better than any book I ever read," he said, as the teacher bade him good morning.

"I knew you would like it. How much have you read?"

"I've read it all through." *

* Whether the boy was perfectly truthful, or the reading very hastily and superficially done, is not stated; but the sequel shows most grateful and blessed results, and marks the story as pre-eminent among sketches of Sunday-school mission work.

“Read it through!” repeated Miss Burns almost incredulously. “Read the Bible through in one week!”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Peter, wondering if she doubted his words. “I began it Sunday evening, and finished it last night. There are a good many things in it I don’t understand, but I like it very much, and mother liked what I read aloud to her. It brought back the times when she was a little girl and lived at her grandfather’s, and she says she don’t know how she could ever have got along without it as she has.”

“Whose history do you like best of all that you have read, Peter?” asked Miss Burns, desirous to know how far he understood what he had read.

“I don’t know as I can tell,” replied Peter. “There are so many that I like. I think the history of Jesus Christ is the most wonderful of any of them, only I can’t see how he could be so kind to the wicked men that wanted him crucified, as to ask God to forgive them.

I like David and Daniel too. Oh, and Joseph, and Moses, and Samuel, and the men that were cast into the fiery furnace, and Peter, and Abraham. Why, I like them all, don't you, teacher?" and Peter looked up smiling into her face.

"Yes," said Miss Burns, "I do. There is more that is instructive and entertaining in the Bible than in all the books in the world beside. There is something for everybody; it is just as much a book for the poor as for the rich; just as much for the ignorant as for the learned; just as much for children and boys like you, as for men and women grown. Then let me tell you another thing, Peter. This Bible will always seem new to you if you read it through hundreds of times. Most books you put aside after once reading, and even the great authors whom you will become acquainted with some day, perhaps, will not bear reading over and over again; after awhile you become so familiar with them that you do not need to keep consulting them in order

to know their opinions, but the Bible is like a never failing spring of pure water, or a mine of precious stones; you may go to it daily, from your childhood up to the latest day of your life, and you will always draw from its pages new truths, fresh thoughts, and gems of wisdom that will make you wise unto salvation. Let it be your constant companion, Peter, and it will make you, with God's blessing, all that your friends can wish you to be, all that you can desire to be both for time and for eternity."

Peter listened with the closest attention to his teacher's words, and treasured them in his heart. From that day he chose the Bible for his companion and guide. I do not mean to say that he gave his heart to God at that time, but that he freely put himself in the way of learning the truth, and showed by his questions, and also by the answers he gave from Sabbath to Sabbath, that he was becoming more and more familiar with its sacred teachings.

In about one year from the time that I first met Peter at the entrance of the theatre, the way was opened for him to enter school. A happy day it was for him, when, dressed in a plain, new suit of gray, he took his place as a regular scholar in the academy at E——. From that time his progress was rapid. We, who felt so deeply interested in his welfare, both spiritual and intellectual, heard from him occasionally such accounts as filled our hearts with thankful joy. Our only fear for him had been that in his eager thirst for knowledge, he would loosen his hold upon the anchor where his soul was stayed. But time proved that our fears were groundless. Peter Donaldson had made the Bible his Book of books too long to cast it aside now for Virgil or Homer, however ardent his admiration for them.

We feel confident that a useful career is opening, may we not say, has opened? before our friend, the little news-boy. He is now almost through his collegiate course, and pro-

poses as soon as it is completed to enter the theological school at A——. God willing, we shall yet see him a faithful, earnest minister of the gospel, and who can estimate the influence for good that he will exert in the world!

Fellow-teacher, we see but a few steps before us as we enter upon our labors, and toil on from day to day. The work seems small, and often unpromising, and we are often disposed to ask, "What avails our anxiety? What are we accomplishing by this mite of service for the Master? Why can we not do some great thing, or make some great sacrifice, that will tell in the history of men?" We gather in little children from the homes of the poor; we

"Put a thought beneath their rags
To ennoble the heart's struggle;"

we tell them the story of Jesus' love; but does it not seem often as though our words fell upon the deafest ears, the most stupid

hearts? Are the seeds of truth dropping into soil that will receive them? Will they ever be quickened into life and vigor, and spring up to bear fruit in the garden of the Lord? Yes, oh yes! Doubt it not. If you are but faithful, doubt it not.

“Go, labor on! your hands are weak,
Your knees are faint, your soul cast down;
Yet falter not; the prize you seek
Is near,—a kingdom and a crown.

“Toil on, faint not, keep watch, and pray!
Be wise the erring soul to win;
Go forth into the world’s highway,
Compel the wanderer to come in.”

XI.

FIRMNESS AND LOVE.

IN looking over these sketches, I find that I have selected for the most part, sunny-side pictures from our experience. Perhaps the impression left upon the mind of the reader will, in consequence, be a somewhat false one. It may be thought that ours has been an exceptional school, one which has known only smooth paths and bright skies. I assure you, however, the bright side is not oftenest out, but in selecting the foregoing simple incidents, I have been led to choose the most hopeful and cheering, partly because they are most dear to my own heart, and partly because I think we are too apt to look upon mission work as a work that gives us small and scanty returns. We dwell more, do we not, fellow-

teacher? on the discouragements we meet than on the encouragements we receive. Little trials and failures are magnified until they become giants in our way to success. We expect too much, and because we find ourselves disappointed, we are ready to despond. I often think how little patience we have with ignorance and vice,—we who have had divine patience exhibited toward us from childhood up—we who sin against light and knowledge, and Christian education,—we who are fenced about with privileges and safeguards of every description, and yet are constantly straying away from the hand that is stretched forth to guide us! Alas for us, were God's patience measured by our own! Then again, do we not too often engage in mission work rather from a cold sense of duty, than from a warm and ardent desire to win souls to Christ? If there is any labor under heaven that demands the full sympathies and enthusiasm of a loving heart, it is this. It taxes to the utmost not only the feelings but the intel-

lect. It calls for ready wit; a more than ordinary amount of tact; a knowledge of human nature; a quick perception of the right method to pursue in cases of insubordination and rebellion that are constantly occurring; a firm will and a pleasant but dignified demeanor.

“Who is sufficient for these things?” I hear some one ask. No one except he have such a desire to succeed as shall lead him to ask for wisdom from God,—who giveth liberally, and upbraideth not,—with faith that never wavers.

It so happened that one Sabbath when in another city, I visited a mission-school. As the day was stormy, and there was consequently a scarcity of teachers, (oh, if teachers would not be so frightened by a little fall of snow or rain!) I took charge of a class of bright-eyed boys whose seat was near the door. The opening exercises were over, and the lesson fairly begun, when a rough looking lad came stamping across the hall to the door,

and unceremoniously made his exit. In a minute or two he was followed by another, who turned just before leaving, and made a wry face, apparently intended for his teacher; very soon two more came heavily along, and disappeared as the last had done with a parting grimace. Of course the attention of my class was diverted.

“What are those boys going for?” I asked.

“Guess they don’t want to stay; he’s got a dry class now,” nodding their heads in the direction whence the boys had come. Almost involuntarily I glanced around, and I confess it cost an effort to repress a smile, as my eyes rested on the tall, lank teacher sitting upright on his chair, his face turned towards the door with the blankest conceivable expression, while with one hand he stroked and pulled his whiskers, and with the other helplessly caressed his knee.

A boy of less than ordinary quickness of perception would have read such a man through almost at a glance, and felt intuitively

that he could hold the reins in his own hand, and do very much as he pleased.

“Guess they dar’sn’t leave Mr. B’s class the way they do his’n,” remarked one of my boys, pointing to the class next on my right.

“Never mind now,” said I, “we have a lesson to attend to, and it won’t do to watch our neighbors.” But when the lesson was over, and the school was called to order for the closing exercises, I took occasion to glance at Mr. B. There was nothing at all imposing in his appearance, certainly. He was small of stature, and rather awkward in his ways, but as he turned his face towards one of his boys who was rather noisily examining his Sunday-school book, I saw where his power lay. It was in the firm, quiet glance of the eye, the kind but decided expression of the mouth, which told as plainly as words could have done, that he knew how to control himself, and consequently that he was perfectly able to control others. The lads who composed the class were rough looking specimens,

but I venture to say not one of them would have dared to dispute the authority of his teacher. When school was dismissed, as I waited for the friend who accompanied me, I overheard the following brief colloquy between the two gentlemen, who, with their classes, had attracted my observation.

“Good morning, brother J.,” said Mr. B., cordially extending his hand. “We’ve had a pleasant session to-day, notwithstanding the storm.”

Mr. J. returned the “good morning,” but made no response to the other assertion.

“You look rather downcast,” remarked Mr. B. “Class trouble you?”

“Not more than usual,” replied Mr. J.; “but I’m going to give it up. Every one of the little scamps got up and left me before I’d fairly begun the lesson, and they do it almost every Sunday.”

“Why, what’s the trouble, brother J.?”

“That is just what I don’t know. I told them not to go, but I might as well have

spoken to the wind, for all the notice they took of me. It is no use to try to do anything with them. I don't see how it happens that I always have the worst boys in the school."

"Are you sure that such is really the case?" asked Mr. B., smiling. "I have thought them very intelligent, bright-looking lads; and a week or two since when you were absent, I invited them into my class, and their behavior was as good as that of my own boys. I am sure I cannot give them a greater compliment than that."

"Well," said Mr. J., in a desponding tone, "I don't know what the trouble is. I never have a pleasant time in my class, and you always do. You seem to have just the knack of getting along with the little scamps. If I had not felt that it was my duty, I would never have consented to become a teacher; as it is, Sunday is the hardest day in the week to me."

"No wonder," thought I, as he walked out

of the hall with his feeble eyes cast down, and his fingers nervously playing with his whiskers. "No wonder, that without 'knack,' and without love, you are unsuccessful in your work."

There are hundreds of teachers like Mr. J., well-meaning, honest people, really desirous to do good, but lamentably deficient in those two essentials to success. Let them not, however, give up their work in despair. An earnest purpose and desire to serve God; patient self-correction, and, above all, prayer for direction and wisdom, will, in nine cases out of ten, make useful and successful teachers of these wavering, disheartened ones. I believe with Gail Hamilton, that all Christians are not alike fitted by nature to be Sunday-school teachers, but I also believe that all Christians, if they have the desire, may educate themselves in such a manner as to fill that position with profit and success. And so I say again to my desponding brother or sister, take courage; look up; try to make yourself a

child with children ; remember you were not always the sedate, sober individual you now are ; you were once as restless and roguish and mischievous as the little urchins upon whom you are too apt to frown. Try what smiles and real, hearty, loving words can do. Believe me, they act like magic on the most hardened ; surely then they will win the heart of childhood, which is always open to kindness and sympathy. Incidents illustrative of this crowd upon me, but I have space for only one.

Ralph B—— was one of the rudest and most obstinate boys it was ever my fortune to know. He was the son of a brutal father and an intemperate mother. At home he got only kicks and blows and curses. When he entered our school, as he had the reputation of being a very bad, unmanageable boy, he was placed in the class of one Miss Frank, a firm disciplinarian, an excellent woman, and valuable teacher in her way, but one of those who maintain their authority by fear rather than

by love. She was uniformly kind to those committed to her care, but it was a cold kindness that didn't seem to have any heart in it. She never frowned, and she never smiled, but by the mere force of her will she controlled her class so admirably, that it was made a sort of reception class for the worst and most disorderly boys who entered the school. So, as I have said, Ralph B—— was placed in it. He stayed there just two Sundays, and then a rebellion broke out. He refused to repeat a text at the request of the teacher. She insisted, but in vain. She looked at him with the steady glance that had hitherto awed every child who had encountered it, but Ralph was proof against it; he fairly looked her out of countenance. Miss Frank very justly felt that her authority must be maintained at all hazards, and quietly informed her rebellious pupil that he must leave the class. He seized his ragged cap at this intimation and started for the door, but before he reached it another teacher, touched with pity for the poor, ne-

glected lad, laid her hand softly on his arm, and with a loving smile, whispered a few words in his ear. Ralph looked up in her face as though she were an angel; his dull eyes brightened, and he silently took a seat that she pointed out to him, and waited until school was dismissed. -

“Let me have Ralph in my class,” she begged of the superintendent. “I know I am not as good a teacher as Miss Frank, but I am sure I can manage poor Ralph, and he mustn’t be sent away from the school. Only think of his parents and his home!” Permission, of course, was granted, and Ralph became a member of Miss S——’s class. Two or three months afterwards I asked her how it was that she had succeeded in taming and refining his rebellious spirit, for by that time he had become one of our best boys. With a smile and a blush she replied, (and there was truth in her words that all teachers will do well to reflect upon),

“I believe in the power of love and sympa-

thy to win the affections of children, and when once you have their affections, you may mould them as you will."

This reply led me one day, when a favorable opportunity offered, to question Ralph himself a little.

"How do you like the school, my boy?"

"Oh, first rate."

"You seem to be happier and pleasanter now than you were when you first came. How is that?"

"I don't know exactly," replied Ralph, hesitating. "I've got a real nice teacher now."

"You had a nice teacher at first," I remarked.

"I didn't like her," said Ralph, decidedly. "She was too smart, and wanted to make me mind any how, and that's what I won't do unless I've a mind to. But Miss S—— don't never tell me I must, but smiles and says if I please, and I do please to do just what she tells me, and that's all there is about it."

In his rough, hesitating way the boy had told the truth. Kindness and love and sympathy will win when all else fails. How much better to try it first then !

XII.

JOHNNY WINTER.

JOHNNY WINTER was an only son in a family of six children. His father was an industrious man, his mother a care-worn, dispirited woman in feeble health. They lived next door to our mission-hall, and I often noticed the group of little ones collected at their window on the Sunday mornings, evidently watching our children with deep interest as they gathered from all directions about the door. One day, I ventured to call and inquire if the family were connected with any church or Sunday-school. Mr. Winter was at home, sitting by the kitchen fire, with his boy Johnny perched upon his knee. As I made the inquiry, I observed that Mrs. Winter cast a quick, deprecating glance at her husband, who replied rather roughly,

"I don't believe in that sort of thing, miss. You see I am honest about it, though my wife hates to have me speak out."

"It is a good thing to be plain and honest about what one says," I replied, "but I am really sorry to hear that you don't believe in Sunday-schools, for I hoped that you would let your little ones come to ours next Sunday, if they did not belong anywhere else. Our hall is close by your door, and I have often noticed their faces at the window, as I have come up the street. I am sure they would like to come."

"I would," said Johnny. "I want to go to the Sunday-school. Benny Frank goes, and he says it is first rate."

Mr. Winter laughed and patted Johnny's head. I saw at a glance that the boy was his father's idol, and if my point were carried it must be through him. So I said to him,

"That is what I would like very much, Johnny, if your papa is willing. You must ask him to let you and little sisters come next

Sunday, and I think I can show you some pictures that you will like."

"I want to go, pa. May I?" began Johnny. "I want to see the pictures, and Benny says they are real good women that keep the school, and they give the children a little paper every week. Can't I go, pa?" I thought the case was in safe hands, and after making one or two inquiries about the children, I rose to go. But Mr. Winter stopped me by asking,

"What do you teach the children, miss? I'm very particular what mine learn."

"We teach them texts of Scripture and children's hymns, and some of the older classes use question-books. Then we sing, and repeat the Commandments. Why can't you come in and visit the school, Mr. Winter, and see for yourself?"

"To tell the truth, Miss," he replied, "I don't think much of Sunday-schools and churches, as I said before. I suppose you'd be shocked if I should tell you that I am a Deist."

“O, no,” I said, for he paused, evidently expecting me to express my astonishment, “I am not shocked, but I feel sorry for you, my friend. Do you wish your children to follow you in your belief?”

“I want them to think for themselves,” he replied. “I shall not try to influence them one way or another after they are old enough to form their own opinions, and I don’t want any one else to. That’s what I often tell my wife; she’s a member of a Baptist church, and she’d like to have them all go to Sunday-school and meeting every Sunday, but I won’t consent to it.”

I saw Mrs. Winter quietly wipe her eyes as she stooped to lay her baby in the cradle, but she did not speak.

“Well,” I said, rising again to go, “I mean to expect this little fellow and one or two of his sisters next Sunday. I promise you, Mr. Winter, that they shall learn nothing in our school that will make them less obedient, or truthful, or affectionate than they now

are, and if you wish, they may learn hymns instead of Bible verses, until you are willing that they shall learn the latter."

Mr. Winter laughed, but shook his head, and I went away feeling somewhat disheartened, only as I closed the door I heard Johnny coaxing,

"Mayn't I go, pa? I want to go awful bad."

Johnny gained his point in this as in most cases, and on the following Sunday he was one of the first to greet me as I entered the hall. His sister Mary was with him, looking every whit as pleased as he, only more quiet about it.

"This is my new jacket," said Johnny, "and I've got a new cap to wear to your Sunday-school, and we are coming all the time, me and Mamie, if I want to. I made pa say that I might come." Johnny was a very bright, intelligent child for his years. He soon became deeply interested in the school, and no matter what the weather was, he was

always present, with his little hymn perfectly learned. I continued to call often on the family, and was pleased to find that Mr. Winter took some interest in Johnny's lesson, although he still said that he did not like either church or Sunday-school, and if he had his way, the children should not be seen inside the walls.

"That is the way he always talks," said his wife one evening, following me to the door with a light, "but Johnny and Mary never would have gone if he had not given them leave. I wouldn't have dared to let them, but, O, I am so glad that he was willing," and tears sprang to her eyes.

The next Sunday Johnny marched into the hall triumphant, and whispered in my ear,

"I am going to learn Bible verses like Benny Frank. Pa says I may. I teased him till he told me yes."

Another point gained. It may be supposed that I watched the progress of events with

much interest. Our anniversary was approaching. Johnny and Mamie had each a hymn to repeat, and of course they were anxious that their father and mother should be present to hear them. Johnny began to "coax pa" three weeks beforehand, but I confess I had my doubts in regard to his success, for Mr. Winter had positively declared that nothing would tempt him to enter either a church or the Sunday-school room. The evening came at length; the children began to gather in the hall at an early hour, but I missed Mamie and Johnny. Can it be possible, I thought, that their father, wearied by their importunity, has refused to let them come to-night? The exercises had begun, it was ten minutes past the time, and Johnny had never been late before. I was beginning to feel quite anxious, when I heard the patter of little feet on the stair, and in a moment he appeared, his bright face all a-glow with smiles, and holding fast his father's hand, while Mamie and her mother followed close behind.

The hall was already well filled, but you may be sure we found seats for Mr. and Mrs. Winter. Early in the following week, I called at their house. It was in the morning, and the father was gone to his work, and the older children were at school. Only Mrs. Winter and the baby were at home. She was singing at her household work as I opened the door, and greeted me with such a smile that I could scarcely believe it was the same sad countenance into which I had so often looked with pity for the past three or four months.

“I was just thinking about you, Miss S——,” she said, offering me the rocking chair. “I was almost sure you would be in this week. Weren’t you real glad to see Joseph and me at the anniversary last Sunday?”

“Indeed I was, and I thought you both seemed pleased with the exercises.”

“That we were. Joseph was glad he went, but poor little Johnny got almost discouraged about his going. How that child did tease!

His father will do anything for him. I always knew that, but I must confess I didn't think that even Johnny could coax him to any kind of a meeting. And you must know that he was so pleased with what he saw and heard at the anniversary, that he says Letty and Fanny may go to Sunday-school now if they want to. O, I can't help feeling as though Joseph will give up his foolish notions some time, and become a Christian man. It is what I pray for every day."

"I hope that your prayers will be answered," I replied. "Indeed it seems to me that God is answering them in thus leading your husband step by step towards the truth. I think you have great cause for thankfulness and encouragement, Mrs. Winter."

"I think I have," she said, wiping her eyes. "Yes, I think I have, and now Johnny has begun to coax his father to go with him to the children's meeting, Sunday afternoon. I don't know whether he will, but Johnny is pretty much in earnest about it."

And Johnny conquered again. Mr. Winter came to the children's meeting, not only on the next Sunday, but on the next, and the next, and the next; until we felt quite as sure of seeing him, as we did of seeing Johnny himself. So time passed on until a certain Sunday came, and news was brought to the hall by little Mamie, that Johnny was very sick with the scarlet fever. As soon as school was dismissed, I went over to visit the little sufferer. He lay in his father's arms, panting for breath, while the poor man bent over him the picture of despair.

"Oh, Miss S——," he cried, as he saw me, "do you think that I am going to lose my Johnny? It can't be that God is going to take him from me."

"Pray, pa; won't you please pray?" asked the little sufferer, in pleading accents.

"O, I can't! I don't know how, Johnny, darling. Let the teacher pray," and great tears rolled down the father's rough cheeks.

"No, pa, you pray; do say 'Our Father.'"

“Dear Johnny, I don’t know it; I don’t remember the words.”

“Say it after me, pa; won’t you, please? ‘Our Father which art in heaven.’” Johnny waited, until with a voice choked with sobs, his father repeated the words. Then he went on, little by little, the father following, until the prayer was finished.

“Now I’ll go to sleep, pa,” whispered the child, closing his eyes, “and perhaps when I wake up, I’ll be in heaven with Jesus.”

“I can’t bear it—I can’t!” cried Mr. Winter, laying Johnny down on his mother’s lap, and throwing himself upon the floor, upon his face. “My boy, Johnny, I can’t give him up.”

No one attempted to soothe the poor man’s grief, but we watched beside Johnny all that day. The fever was at its height, and when the doctor came in at noon he shook his head gravely. We knew that he had given little Johnny up. But he was mistaken. The child lived, though for days he hung, as it

were, between life and death. In those days of suspense, while watching, fearing, hoping, beside the little cot, Mr. Winter came to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. His pride was humbled at the foot of the cross, and resigning his foolish conceits, and vain philosophy, he sought and found forgiveness and peace.

XIII.

THE CLASS ON THE STAIRS.

ONE spring morning soon after the exercises of the school had commenced, the noise of little feet pattering up over the stairs, and children's voices conversing in suppressed tones, attracted the notice of the classes which were seated nearest the entrance to the hall.

Walking leisurely that way, I found four or five little urchins seated on the stairs, unwashed, uncombed, and half-clad, but studying with evident interest the pleasant pictures that met their inquisitive eyes through the half-open door.

"Well, boys," I said, quietly leaning towards them, "won't you come up and visit our school?"

A shadow of a smile passed from one to

another of the group, but no one ventured a reply.

"Don't be afraid," I added, encouragingly. "Presently we will have some singing. Do you like singing?"

"I'll bet I do," responded one voice, energetically. "That's what I come for. . Let's go up, boys."

"Yes, come," I urged. "I will give you a seat, and you may stay until school is done."

"Don't ye go, Mike Flannigan," said a red-headed, freckle-faced boy, in a rich brogue. "Ye know what the praist tould us,—don't ye go."

"I would like to have you come," I said. "There are some very pretty pictures and mottoes on the walls that you would like to see, but if you are afraid, you may sit here on the stairs as long as you please."

"I a'n't afraid," spoke up little Mike, doubling his fists and assuming a pugilistic attitude. "I'd go up there if I wanted, for all of Pat Rooney."

"You must do as you please," I said, rather indifferently. "If you decide to come up you may take the seat close by the door and sit very quietly. But perhaps before I leave you, you will tell me your names, and where you live?"

"Mike Flannigan," "Pat Rooney," "Pat Mahoney," and "Dan Reardon," "and," added Mike, "we all live in Cardigan Court."

"Ah," said I, "I go down there frequently to see Jimmy Connelly and his mother. Do you know Jimmy?"

"I'll bet I do," answered Mike. "He's tried to get me in here more'n once. His mother's a heretic, she is."

"Perhaps I will come and see your mother some time, Mike. Do you think she would like it?" The boy hung his head, and Pat Rooney impudently answered for him,

"She wouldn't have a heretic inside of her house. She drove out Biddy Connelly wid the broomstick, and sprinkled all the place where she'd stood the feet of her, wid holy water."

Not a very encouraging prospect, truly, for the Mission-school laborer, but allowance must be made for Pat's imagination, and talent for exaggeration.

"Well, boys," I said, "it is about time for the singing, and I must bid you good morning,—but come again, won't you? The stairs are quite at your service if you like them." There came no reply to this invitation, but a smile and wink exchanged between the two Pats and Mike Flannigan, assured me that I had not seen the last of them.

Purposely, I kept away from Cardigan Court during the following week, but I remembered my little friends, and went to school on Sunday morning with a nicely colored print in my hand, which I intended to use for their benefit as well as amusement, and which I trusted would induce them to come still again.

The second bell had scarcely struck, when a red head appeared first outside the door, but in full view of the desk; then a freckled

face which was quickly averted as it found itself observed. While the opening hymn was being sung, steps were heard coming up the stairs, and other heads appeared in the neighborhood of the red hair. Plainly, my class on the stairs had not failed me. As soon as the opening exercises were over, and the lessons for the day had begun, I took the print and went quietly to the door. The two Pats, Mike and Dan, were all there, and with them another lad of about the same size and age.

“Ah! good morning, boys,” I said, and a broad smile was the response I received,—a very satisfactory response, by the way. “I am glad to see you. Who is this friend you have brought along?”

“Morris Grany. He wants to hear ’em sing ‘Marching Along.’ Will they sing it to-day?”

“Yes. Where does Morris live?”

“In Cardigan Court with the rest of us,” replied Mike. He can sing hisself, first-rate, and whistle too.”

Meanwhile, I held the print in such a manner that the boys could see it distinctly, and I soon had the satisfaction of knowing that they were interested. Five pairs of eager, questioning eyes were fastened upon the picture; presently Pat Rooney ventured on saying,

“What is it ye have there, miss?”

“This? Oh, it is a colored print of Noah and the animals who were saved in the ark, when a flood of water came and swept away all the houses and people that were on the earth, except Noah and his family.”

“I never heard of him,” said Mike, “did you, Pat?”

“No,” replied Pat. “There’s a horse, and a lion, and an elephant, and lots of other baists besides.”

“And there’s a kangaroo and a monkey,” interrupted Dan Reardon. “What a heap of ’em there be, miss.”

“Yes, a great many,” said I. “I will sit down here on the stairs and we will see if we know the names of them all.”

I will not detain the reader with an account of the animated conversation that ensued. It is sufficient to say that the boys were interested, and that half an hour passed very rapidly away, in examining the print, and in giving them an outline of Noah's history.

When I rose to return to the hall, I remarked that I had another colored picture at home, which I expected to bring with me on the next Sunday, and if any of them were present, I would perhaps show it to them.

"I'll be here, miss," said the two Pats in a breath, and "I'll be here," echoed Mike and the other boys, with very bright eyes, "unless," added Dan Reardon, after a moment's pause, "unless the praist or my mother finds it out."

"And who's to tell 'em, unless you do it yourself?" asked Mike, involuntarily doubling up his fists and looking fierce. "'Ta'n't best you do that, Dan Reardon."

"And it isn't meself that would tell o' meself," replied Dan, warmly.

“Never mind,” I interfered, “don’t quarrel about it, but come all of you if you can.”

So I left them.

The next Sunday, and indeed for two or three successive weeks, my class on the stairs came as regularly and punctually as any in the school. I taught them what I could by pictures, and found them bright, intelligent boys, but I could not persuade them to venture inside the hall. They were afraid the priest would find it out and forbid their coming at all, and it was at length decided to urge the point no longer, but improve the opportunity we had of teaching them the great truths of the Bible, trusting the result with the “Lord of the harvest.”

About a month had thus passed, when one Sunday I missed the merry faces of my boys. Not one of them came even within sight of the hall. The next Sunday morning came and went, and still the stairs were unoccupied. Early in the ensuing week I ventured to visit Cardigan Court and Mrs. Connelly, hoping

also to see or learn something of my disbanded class. It was not a very pleasant locality. The houses that frowned down upon the narrow court were crowded with inmates, and the side-walk was generally thronged with idle, red-faced men, gossiping, red-faced women, and dirty, quarrelsome children; but I was always sure of finding one clean spot, even in Cardigan Court, and that was Mrs. Connelly's kitchen.

After paying her a short visit, and hearing the oft-repeated story of the persecution, reviling and contumely, which were heaped upon her by her Roman Catholic neighbors, I bade her good afternoon, and was just leaving her door, when she called me back, and in an undertone, remarked,

“Father O’Leary has been round, miss, and they’ve told him about the b’ys that have been going to your school, and he’s put a stop to it. Johnny says that Mike Flannigan is bound to go, and his mother had to tie him til the bed-post to keep him in Sunday week;

it's a shame, miss, to tell on 'em, for sure an' they could get no harm going to a dacent place."

"I am sorry to hear this," I said, and went on my way, with no very charitable feelings in my heart, towards Father O'Leary. Indeed, so intensely was I occupied with the subject, that I scarcely noticed a troop of little children who followed close behind me, until my name uttered by one of them, attracted my attention. Without turning my head, I listened.

"Snake in the grass," ventured one of the train; then came a suppressed laugh. "Snake in the grass," somewhat louder, and followed by an unmistakable titter. Then two or three voices in concert, "ho! snake in the grass! snake in the grass!" followed by a burst of uproarious mirth, in which several older bystanders joined. Apparently oblivious to this commotion, I walked leisurely along. Presently a boy somewhat older, and somewhat dirtier and more ragged than the rest, darted

up from a subterranean hole, with a long piece of cord in his hand, and joined the group who were escorting me down the court, and as the outcry of "Snake in the grass!—snake in the grass!" became louder and more mirthful with this addition, I suddenly stopped, and turned full upon them, laying my hand on the shoulder of the lad, who was describing certain curves and circular movements with his cord, evidently in imitation of the reptile upon which they had been calling, and which, as I had before suspected, they in some way connected with me.

"What do you mean, my boy?" I asked, and at the question, the children slunk away to a safe distance, with the exception of the little fellow upon whom I had laid my hand. "What is all this about?"

It was some moments before I obtained a reply, the boy meanwhile using all his strength to escape me. At length I said,

"You must tell me, and then I will let you go; but I want to know why you follow me

in this way, and what you mean by calling after me?"

"The praist said as how," began the boy, whimpering, "as how—you was a—a—"

"Well, what? You need not be afraid,—only tell me the truth."

"He said as how you was a—a snake in the grass, miss."

"Why did he say that?"

"Because you got Mike and Pat, and Pat Rooney and Dan Reardon, and Morris and the rest, to go to your school, and because you learn 'em all sorts of wickedness, and so they said for us to call you 'snake in the grass' whenever you went along."

"Who said for you to call me so?"

"Mike's mother, and Biddy Reardon and the rest."

"Very well," said I, unloosing my hold on his shoulder, "you may go now, but you must never do this again; and you may tell Mike's mother and the rest, that if I cannot pass here alone without being followed, I shall

take a policeman with me, when I come this way."

The threat was sufficient to prevent a recurrence of the scene, but my poor boys were lost to me forever. So I thought as I turned my steps towards home, and so I feared, as day after day I remembered them in my prayers. And yet, when occasionally I catch a glimpse of Mike Flannigan and Pat Rooney loitering about the hall, with wistful faces, I have a faint hope that they may yet return to us, or, if not, that the lessons they learned while with us, may be so impressed upon their minds, that through the blessing of God, they may prove the means of their salvation.

XIV.

"GO WORK IN MY VINEYARD."

"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest."—Matt. ix. 37, 38.

THE call for laborers is as loud and imperative now, as it was when Jesus first uttered these words. Broad harvest fields are opened and opening before us. Fellow-servants of the Lord! shall we sit idle in our own sunny vineyards, enjoying our peace, and dreaming our dreams, while the day of the Lord is marching on? There is work for all. In whatever direction we turn our gaze, behold fields white for the harvest! And how good is God, who has given to the feeblest and weakest of his children ability to do something for him.

“Ah, what can I do?” asked one, a poor, bed-ridden colored woman, lifting her great, sad eyes to mine. “What can I do?”

“Do you not love the Lord, Chloe?”

“Do I not? Oh, Miss Jessie!” and the tears came in a moment. “If I hadn’t loved him, how could I borne to lie here all these years?”

“Do you pray, Chloe?”

“Now, missie, you’re making fun of poor old Chloe. If I didn’t pray, I’d be one of the Lord’s cast’ways.”

“What do you pray for, Chloe?”

“Oh, lots and lots of things; more’n I could tell you in a day.”

“But tell me some of them, Chloe. Do you pray for any one besides yourself?”

“Now, missie, you don’t think I’m so self-ish mean as only to talk to the Lord ’bout this poor old Chloe, when there’s such heaps of folks that don’t pray for themselves, and such heaps of others that’s of some ’count in the world.”

“I don’t think you are selfish, Chloe, but I thought I would like to know who some of the people are that you pray for.”

“Well, I’ll tell you, Miss Jessie. There’s old Hannah, she’s worse off than I am, for she’s blind two ways. She’s blind with her body’s eyes and she’s blind with her soul’s eyes, and that’s the worst. I’ve prayed for her every day these ten years, and she ha’n’t seen the Lord yet, but I won’t give her up till she does. The day’ll come when she will see him, and be ready to shout Hallelujah, instead of groaning and complaining all the time. Then there’s Juney and her chil’en, poor little things that never gets no teaching; they come in here every day, and I talks to ’em about the Lord Jesus, and I prays for ’em morning and night, reg’lar. Then there’s the good minister, and the city missionaries, such good ladies and gentlemen, but they needs heaps of wisdom, and so I ask the good Lord to give it ’em. And there’s you, missie dear, I never forgets you.”

“That will do, Chloe,” I said as she paused. “Let me tell you you are working for God just where he has seen fit to place you, and you are accomplishing as much in your sphere as the good minister is in his.”

“Thank you, missie dear,” said Chloe. “Sometimes I do feel as though the Lord would take the will for the deed, but other times I get discouraged, and seems as if there was nothing I could do for him. I mean to keep on praying, though.”

Oh! if we were all as faithful in our lot as poor Chloe in hers, there would be fewer waste places in what should be the garden of the Lord. And why are we not? Why is it that we let slip the golden opportunities for doing good which daily present themselves? There are broad fields opening before us at the south and southwest; heathen lands are waiting to hear the glad tidings of salvation; but ah! there is work to be done here in our streets, at our very doors, and woe be unto us if we neglect it! The children must be saved.

It is well to have our Refuges, and Homes, and Asylums for the fallen, but better, O far, far better, to take the little ones and teach them while yet tender, and comparatively innocent, of Him who died to save them from the power and consequences of sin. Do you say that the teaching of the Sabbath is more than counteracted by the influences of the week? True, perhaps, if you look upon your work as accomplished for the next six days when you leave the Sunday-school room. But if you are a faithful teacher, the hour spent in your class is by no means the only one that you will devote to it during the week. Visit the children at their homes; get acquainted with their parents, and older brothers and sisters; have a smile for the baby, (a little candy will not go amiss), and a pleasant word for all. They may look suspiciously upon you at first, but you can soon disarm suspicion if your heart is really interested in them. When once they are satisfied on this point, speak to them of Jesus, and my word for it, they will at least

give you respectful attention. I have often heard the remark made by teachers, otherwise faithful and devoted, "It is utterly impossible for me to converse with these people at their homes, on the subject of religion. I don't know what to say to them." Now I never doubted the sincerity of the teacher in making such an assertion, but I always feel that the lion in their way is an imaginary one that will disappear after one or two hearty encounters. Let the heart be filled to overflowing with love to God and pity for sinful souls, and out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak. If you can speak but a word, and if that word be choked with tears, speak it. The Lord will give utterance to the most timid and shrinking one who desires to warn the sinner and point him to the Saviour. The real trouble is, it seems to me, that we are too reserved in speaking of our religious feelings and experience to one another. Our religious life is too much a life by itself. We find no difficulty in talking of our household affairs, our

friends, our pleasures, and our sorrows, but when it comes to pass that the subject of our friendship with Christ is introduced, is it not too often the case that the busy tongue grows suddenly mute, the earnest voice silent, and a cloud settles upon the countenance that should be wreathed with smiles at the sound of that blessed name? It ought not so to be. Why should we not talk often with one another of the blessed hopes that belong to us as Christians, and, moved by our own abounding joy, invite them to become partakers in them?

I have recently visited a Refuge for fallen women. The building is well located; it is commodious, well-furnished, and scrupulously neat; the arrangements for the comfort of its inmates are admirable. And who are the fallen ones sheltered by this friendly roof? The matron opens the door of the work-room, and they are before me. I had expected to see twenty or twenty-five sad, hopeless women—instead, there smile upon me that number of rosy, sweet-faced girls, between the ages of

fourteen and nineteen. Is it possible that these children, who still carry the innocent brows of youth, have walked in the ways of sin! At the request of the matron, they sing:

“Depth of mercy! can there be
Mercy still reserved for me?
Can my God his wrath forbear,
Me, the chief of sinners, spare?”

And as their sweet voices blend in unison, it seems harder still to believe that they are not the pure-hearted girls they seem. “What brings them here?” I ask, as we leave the room. “So young, so innocent-looking, what can induce them to go astray?” “It is the want of instruction,” replied the matron. “They are under no restraint at home, and they are not taught the evil of sin. Some of them are orphans. More are the children of intemperate parents, who leave them to go whither they please, and in this great city there are enough to flatter their silly vanity, and tempt them to sin.” Sad, is it not? I

left the house of refuge, feeling that it was doing its work, but more than ever impressed with the need of beginning a step back of it, and rescuing the little ones before the touch of pollution sullies their tender hearts. They may be saved, they will be saved if Christians do their duty ; and Oh ! when in the day of judgment one and another and another of these souls, snatched from destruction by your efforts, comes rejoicing before the throne, will you not feel that every self-denial, and every sacrifice you made, is repaid ten thousand fold ? God grant that in that solemn hour not one despairing voice may say to us, “ Ye had it in your power to show us the right way, and ye would not ! ”



K. G. 3

